



GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Document Delivery and
Resource Sharing Standing Committee
*How a united library field can tackle the
challenges of the future*

June 2017

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Introduction

In June 2017, in an asynchronous online forum, 8 librarians participated in a survey about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent over 150 years of library experience. These 8 librarians represent 5 different countries and varying library types and sizes with especially deep knowledge of academic libraries.

The Document Delivery and Resource Sharing Standing Committee chose an online forum due to the impossibility to convene all members located around the globe prior to the WLIC in Wroclaw. The asynchronous online forum offered wide participation and representation. With the Committee's focus on resource sharing, the collaboration of libraries working together was the thread that wove through the conversation. By working together, libraries strengthen each other and are able to provide more services to more people across the globe.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in this forum, this means that as globalization increases, the reach and role of libraries and librarians also increases. The global network opens up access as never before, and libraries are needed more than ever to represent facts, truth, and understanding within and across cultures and continents.

E.g. Libraries are an accessible source of factual information, where people come to find the truth. Libraries are inclusive community centres where all voices are represented. To make this vision reality, librarians feel part of a global community where they exchange ideas and help each other overcome challenges.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

LIST ANSWERS Q4:

1. Access to information
2. Open to all (non-discriminatory)
3. Support civil society
4. Support life-long learning
5. Preservation of knowledge and culture

Comments:

Free and open access to everyone regardless of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation was the most common response.

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

LIST ANSWERS Q5:

1. Customer service (putting the user first)
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2. Free access to information
 3. Providing reliable information (information literacy)
 4. Teaching and supporting education
 5. Providing a safe space for all
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Comments:

Libraries put the user first. All of the participants referenced as aspect of the user-centric focus of libraries though customer service, access to information, and safe spaces for all.

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

LIST ANSWERS Q6:

1. Strengthen their societies and communities
 2. Defend freedom of access to reliable information
 3. Lobby for freedom of thought and free access to information
 4. Support less advantaged libraries and users
 5. Promote themselves and what they do
-

Comments:

The participants felt strongly that libraries should do more advocacy work: advocacy for libraries, advocacy for users, and advocacy for free access to information wherever and whoever you are.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

LIST ANSWERS Q7:

1. Going it alone
 2. Worrying about ownership over access
 3. Getting caught up in library jargon and outdated policies
 4. Buying print titles
 5. Individual work instead of collaboration in resource sharing, metadata production, and collection development
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Comments:

This group steeped in Resource Sharing, was very concerned about how divided and individualistic many libraries and the library profession is. Libraries need to cooperate together to reduce costs and increase access.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

LIST ANSWERS Q8:

1. Economic inequality
2. Climate change and the impact on cultures, governments, and migration
3. Freedom of expression in times of growing radicalism and populism
4. Funding cuts to public institutions
5. Lack of education and factual information sources

Comments:

Economic challenges took center stage in this debate. From economic inequality to library funding to the disruptions of climate change, there seems to be an economic component to all of these challenges.

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

LIST ANSWERS Q9:

1. Digital disruption and the perception that “everything is online” (the Google generation)
2. Licensing restrictions for easy sharing and access to digital resources
3. Patron privacy in the digital age
4. Providing a wide range of services to EVERYONE in the community
5. Funding, funding, funding

Comments:

The move from print to digital has been a real challenge for libraries. Digital resources should increase the reach of libraries into the community, but the licenses and the costs sometimes actually decrease the access to resources.

The main professional challenges (Q10):

LIST ANSWERS Q10:

1. Lack of resources and funding
2. Keeping up with technical skills and training
3. Doing more with less
4. Time management
5. Demonstrating relevance

Comments:

Professionally, it can be very hard to find the time and the funding to stay on top of all the

technological changes and evolving resources that libraries provide. Staying relevant and demonstrating that relevance to the community is a challenge.

How a united library field can make a difference

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

LIST ANSWERS Q11:

1. Lack of resources and funding will never go away, but by cooperating and working together, libraries can share resources and expertise to help reduce costs
2. Keeping up with technical skills and training starts with the librarians but can be facilitated by organizations like IFLA
3. A united library field is able to do more with less because we are sharing resources and expertise
4. Digital disruption and licensing challenges require a unified voice and working together to bring about change
5. Cooperation, cooperation, cooperation

Comments:

The only way libraries can meet the challenges identified here is if we put our egos aside and work together as one for the greater good of humanity

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

LIST ANSWERS Q12:

1. Cooperation and collaboration
2. Open communication across libraries, within the community, and with individual library users
3. No libraries left behind
4. Easy access for all
5. Advocacy on behalf of users and for the free flow of information

Comments:

This group keeps coming back to cooperation and collaboration. That is the core of document delivery and resource sharing, and it should be at the core of our united library community

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

LIST ANSWERS Q13:

1. Service to all
 2. Free and equal access to information
 3. Assisting the less privileged, both locally and globally
 4. Collaboration and sharing
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5. Advocacy on behalf of libraries and free society

Comments:

A united library field is not just open to all but actively reaches out to and assists the less privileged both locally and globally

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in an asynchronous online forum in June 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](https://twitter.com/iflaGlobalVision) and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on <https://globalvision.ifla.org/>.