GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the IFLA/LPD Standing Committee meeting

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

May 2nd 2017

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Introduction

On May 2nd 2017, through Zoom, online website for teleconferences and using a Facebook group to gather answers and create a discussion12 librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent 228 years of library experience.

Participants are members of the IFLA Libraries serving Persons with Print disabilities Standing Committee. They represent libraries across the world serving the print disabled, and have experience in Public libraries, school libraries, special libraries, and university libraries.

The group discussed the core values, and main challenges the library field encounters, with a focus on challenges very particular to serving the print disabled, and accessibility issues. All have agreed on the importance of advocacy for building a stronger and effective library field.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates of the LPD group, this means that libraries provide equal and free access to information, where services cater to different needs of the patrons. Libraries are a safe hub for exchange of ideas and knowledge.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. *Free and Equal Access to information*
2. *Freedom of expression and Privacy*
3. *Lifelong learning*
4. *Equality, diversity, Inclusion*
5. *Preservation and protection of cultural heritage*

Comments:

Libraries must have the conditions and mechanisms to ensure access to reading to all potential users.

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. *Information management*
2. *Advocacy*
3. *Collection development and Preservation*
4. *Access to information and Knowledge*
5. *Information literacy*

Comments:

One of the librarians has highlighted the how libraries are not only for learning and leisure, they can also save lives, she works in a medical library and understands through her job the vital role of information in time.

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. *Collaborations and partnerships*
2. *Community engagement/ Providing space*
3. *Education and literacy*
4. *Advocacy*
5. *Accessibility for the print-disabled*

Comments:

Libraries must speak up about their important role in a democratic society and why we cannot be civilized without them and emphasize that they are trustworthy institutions that stand for the core values of libraries.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. *Passivity/ Trivializing their role*
2. *Cutting collections without community input*
3. *One-size fits-all approach (all patrons have difference needs)*
4. *Slow response to change*
5. *Being traditional*

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. *Climate change*
2. *Terrorism/ Extremism*
3. *polarization*
4. *The digital divide including access by people with print disabilities*
5. *Defending democracy and freedom of speech*

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. *Funding*
2. *Copyright restrictions/privacy protection*
3. *Staying Relevant*
4. *Community outreach/be representative of the community*
5. *Providing universal access to information, including services to people with print disabilities*

Comments:

Convincing the library world that accessibility for people with print disabilities enhances the knowledge and information access for everyone—e.g. by converting image-based resources to text, they become searchable and also Championing the Library's role in the information ecosystem are also some of the challenges that were highlighted

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. *Managing Copyright issues*
2. *keeping up with technology*
3. *Professional development*
4. *Promoting the importance of accessibility for the print disabled to insure equal access for all*
5. *Operational excellence*

Comments:

Other challenges that are related to serving the print disabled, is supporting Braille literacy, which is rapidly going down due to emergence of the digital content, and also advocating and supporting copyright exceptions for the production of accessible content for the print disabled.

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. *Partnerships (with library and non-library institutions)*
2. *Sharing knowledge and expertise*
3. *Champion universal accessibility*
4. *Advocacy*
5. *Demonstrating the value of libraries to funders and decision makers.*

Comments:

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The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. *Border free*
2. *Fosters diversity and inclusion*
3. *Ethical and moral commitment to access of information as a human right*
4. *Innovative*
5. *Strong leadership*

Comments:

A united library field should act as a pilar for democracy and freedom of speech.

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. *Strong collaborations and partnerships*
2. *Stimulate community engagement*
3. *Unified advocacy addressing agreed-upon values and concerns such as accessibility*
4. *Universal literacy*
5. *Data management and access*

Comments:

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A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in [PLACE NAME] on [DATE]. 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/.