GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the IFLA MetLib Conference meeting in Montréal
How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future

May 5, 2017

Contributors

This report is created by:

Carolyn Anthony, Danielle Chagnon, Corrado Di Tillio, Etienne Mackiewicz, Ivan Filion, Carme Galve Montore, Louise Guillemette-Labory, Vladislava Ivkovic Markovic, Theo Kemperman, Marjan Marinkovic, Siobhan Reardon, Tomas Rehak, Josephine Siegrist, Dzidra Smita, Anna-Maria Soininvaara, Stanley Tan, Paul Trumphour, Shiwei Wang, Lucia Werder, Zhun Zhang

Index

Introduction

On May 5, 2017, in Montréal (Canada), 20 librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent more than 226 years of library experience.

The workshop was held during the last day of the IFLA MetLib Conference (April 30 – May 5, 2017) and was attended by a group of registered participants. Being a conference about public libraries of large cities and metropolitan areas, almost all the participants represented that type of library.

Due to the fact that, at the time of the kick-off workshop in Athens, the programme was almost full, only a one hour time slot was scheduled. So we could not dedicate enough time to personal stories and also questions nr. Q6 and Q7 were skipped. The collected questions were proposed in a Google Forms survey in the period May 10-18 to the 20 participants who were asked to mark up to five questions (we had 9 respondents).

The co-hosts (BANQ / Bibliothèque and Archives Nationales Québec and the Libraries of the City of Montréal) provided three excellent facilitators.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in Montréal, this means that *libraries become hubs for in-person exchange and problem-solving, helping to bridge gaps between fractured populations and leading to community development*.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1.   *Cultivating knowledge, imagination & possibility in everyone*
2.   *Accessibility, open space with no fees (everybody can come); be open for all*
3.   *Access to good information, with mediation*
4.   *Intellectual freedom, freedom of expression*
5.   *Support of inspiration of life-long learning; education*

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1.   *Community building*

2.	*Providing access to good information*
3.	*Organization of knowledge; keeping and classifying knowledge*
4.	*Being a suitable place for many different activities*
5.	*Being fantastic social-levellers, democratizing literacy*

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Comments:

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1.	*Social gap and inequalities, poverty; income inequality*
2.	*Digital inequality; digital gap*
3.	*Alternative facts and the post-truth decision-making*
4.	*Keeping up with the pace of changes*
5.	*Sustainability*

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1.	*Lack of funding; struggle with resources; lower priority in budget, manpower, etc.; do more with less resources*
2.	*Relevance/currency to global changing trends/needs; keeping up with all societal changes (esp. literacy)*
3.	*Staff development and education*
4.	*Being agile*
5.	*Free access to information*

Comments:

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1.	*Difficulty in inspiring change to staff*
2.	*Finding time to do more strategic things*
3.	*Keeping up with current knowledge*
4.	*Pass on acquired knowledge + insight*
5.	*No match between the needs of the library and the education of librarians*

Comments:

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. Share experiences on common issues, resources, expertise, knowledge, best practice, ideas and examples, challenges, partnerships

2. One single & strong voice; advocacy; to speak about the lot of good things we do in the library world and outside

3. Training more smart librarians / construct a smart library

4. Cooperation to avoid duplications

5. Leverage digital capabilities to cross physical boundaries

Comments:

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. Innovation, being open for new ideas, curiosity

2. Work together to resolve common problems; cross-boundary cooperation

3. Open conversation; clear & open communication (structures); seamless communication channels (shared resources)

4. Share standards and a brand with an alert threshold

5. Reliability, trust

Comments:

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. Facilitate knowledge sharing; knowledge/information integration; good infrastructure or platform to share things; structuring connected-ness

2. Exchanging ideas and staff

3. Make our work visible

4. Be champions of access to information

5. Partnerships / win-win / clarity of goals

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in Montréal (Canada) on May 19, 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/.