

International Federation of Library Associations
Gothenburg, Sweden, August 10-15, 2010

Theme: Open access to knowledge - promoting sustainable progress

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.

State Librarian GladysAnn Wells attended the conference in 2010 and filed the following series of reports.

Thursday, August 12

The work of the Copyright and Legal Matters Committee is very interesting. They are working with the survey results that graphed the availability of legal deposit and copyright to libraries worldwide. As you might guess, it is very uneven. The African and Latin and South American areas among those less fortunate. Therefore they have developed 12 minimum principles for library access to national support for materials collection. I will scan the list when I get home and send it with a final report. It is very interesting and workable. The hope is to encourage WIPO to include something like this in its international standards and guidelines.

Also attended a fabulous session on preservation and environmental impact. It might make a good CE course for us. I was pleased that the Library of Congress presentation was very accessible and practical. They have been working since 1999 to systematically track, measure and address the environmental impact of the energy costs of preserving their collections. They also have developed policies around the purchase of supplies and try to purchase environmentally friendly items. Also, they investigated all chemicals used in preservation and have been very careful about that as well.

Another major IFLA effort is support and training for developing countries library associations. There are quite a few Poster Sessions devoted to workshops held world wide and assistance and training provided.

I will have a disc of all program papers submitted by deadline and many are also available on the IFLA website.

Because of the new IFLA organization, the conference now has themes (sound familiar?) and they are:

Open access and digital resources
Policy, strategy and advocacy
Users driving access and services
Tools and techniques
Ideas, innovations, anticipating the new

There are over 350 papers being presented in seven languages, with English the most common. There are 200 Poster Sessions and 80 exhibitors.

Thursday, August 12

Today GATES named their award....went to a small library in Greece (pop about 50,000=) The Veria Central Public Library in Northern Greece. Of course use of technology was key, but the ability of the library to appeal to local political decision makers was also mentioned several times. The Library reaches out to the population outside of the community through internet enabled book mobiles....raising their service numbers to 180,000. The Library is seen as a leader in Greece and even the Greek President has been in attendance at functions. Really nice people, a great library with all the things you would expect in an unlikely place.

A note to think about: IMLS and the IFLA copyright folks did not know (until I mentioned it to them because of what I cope with in Az) that state and local governments can copyright their materials under Federal law. Sigh....something that very much needs to be a part of the discussion, even if not in each state.

OCLC is still talking about Cloud based services. In my opinion, not much more details than our earlier conversations. We really need to think about this.....those of us with records and archives have special issues, but we all need to go with eyes wide open into this new development.

IFLA is magical because in one session you can be given a glimpse of what is happening all over the world. In an advocacy session this afternoon someone said libraries could not market because they are publicly funded....yike.

We have no idea how blessed we are, even with all our troubles. Think about your most significant accomplishment being several books going donkey back over mountains and take heart.....

Friday, August 13

The Sweden folks have wisely used this conference (where members of parliament and several Lord Mayors attending the opening) to launch their Library Lovers national campaign. Lots of fun.

They also created a Sweden Libraries aisle.....where many of the public and academic libraries had simple exhibits of their favorite projects. It is quite an effective over view and would work at a state meeting I think.

A great number of the papers and meetings here are about advocacy in one way or another....and the understanding and level of activity is all over the world.....from we don't need and should not do it, to the national assn that believes that policial advocacy is their ONLY job.

IMLS is very active in the legal (Nancy), continuing education(Mary) and statistics(Michelle)....so we are well represented on the standing committes.

Also Colorado (High Plains), Kansas (ethics workshop) and Arizona (online institute using the Western council competencies) were all used as models by a WebJunction speaker earlier today.....material in case studies was very very well received.

Friday, August 13

Today the plenary speaker was fabulous. His name is Hans Rosling and his web site is www.gapminder.org He is a doctor who has worked in Africa and even discovered a new disease. He was perhaps the best speaker I have ever heard. He talked about dealing with our unconscious perceptions by operating in a fact based universe. His web site has the information....but his presentation had us laughing and hooting. His conclusion: reading is more important than vaccines and that the three things the lower income worlds need most are electricity, literacy and libraries. What is not to love?

It was especially important as we have heard about many nations with wide areas of darkness....even if there is a computer, there is not enough capacity to really use it in terms of electricity, let alone broadband. We heard from an African librarian who decided to take his library training out into the South African bush to attempt to deal with 11 recognized language variations and 11 cultures. His stories were amazing.....so were the pictures. henrich.spingies@nrf.ac.za (not sure if he has a web site with the pictures....but I was impressed.) He was so articulate about knowledge management in that environment!!

Also attended a presentation by Liv Saeteren, Oslo City Library, who described the large public library dilemmas so well. Not so much that would be new for all of you, but I wanted to share a few things that she expressed so well:

A library exists to organize the meeting of content and people

We must deal with a future that has no authoritative answers.

Do not confuse focus groups (authors, publishers, users, etc) with collection development...they serve different purposes.

The new role of the library is to collect, organize and make available the bits and pieces spread across the web and other venues that must be accessible and preserved for their communities....so we need editors and curators and storytellers

She introduced the concept (to me) of library as stage director bringing the e content to a stable, captured environment for users.

Saturday, August 14

Another major effort is FAIFE, Free access to information for everyone. Sadly every fourth person in the world lives under profound censorship. It is a world wide concern and this group tried to monitor and understand the issues in each culture. Thankfully (in my opinion), they don't rush in to propose solutions with swords, but try to be available when invited to mediate or help.

Since 2001, IFLA has done the IFLA World Report, and it seeks, among other things, to track problems with censorship. Unfortunately it suffers from being voluntary and uneven, but it is at least a start of a window into comparative world wide library numbers.

I was startled to hear that one of the IFLA presenters from Argentina, supposed to discuss the missing people issues related to censorship is missing and no one knows why. Of course we all

hope that it is something normal, but she has not responded to communication for two weeks and did not arrive. AND we think we have problems???

I also experienced a humbling moment as I noticed one of the German delegates eating her lunch with her fork held in her toes...very calmly and easily. She was born without arms. Amazing!

Many of the papers are available through the IFLA web site and they say you can follow the conference as it happens at <http://2010.ifla.org>

Some of the papers on national libraries and open access (session 132) and almost any of the copyright and other legal matters papers would be worth a look over. I would be interested to know if the site really does work as they say....I know they have made great improvements in the last year or two.

It might also be worth checking out the various awards that IFLA gives, not to many, but interesting....will try to find out more.

You will all laugh, but I did not connect my little news briefs with blogging....good thing no one scared me with the term before I got started!!!

Back to the meetings. I leave tomorrow, and will be back in Az late on Monday. Promise to do a wrap up then, if not before.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

I am back in the office and as promised wanted to send one final set of notes. I would have to say that this was one of the best organized IFLA meetings I have attended (it was my 6th over the last more than fifteen years). The organizers seem to have thought of everything. The final amazing detail was a gentleman stationed at the airport (and other) bus stop across from the convention center....looking out for the IFLA people leaving and making sure that they got on the correct bus!!! That was in addition to the constantly staffed information desk that had all the schedules and walked you outside to point to the proper bus stop. Not even I could get lost with that level of help!!!!

I have copies of the IFLA Express for each day and I think they will add to my notes and provide a different kind of summary. I will bring them to Kansas.

Several of the sessions for academic libraries highlighted the need for more space for interactive and group activities and less space for static collections. Apparently the British Library is working with the large academic libraries to provide document delivery so that they can outpace/weed/discard their less used collections. It's a membership based effort that assures 24 hours turnaround. I believe information can be found at www.ukrr.ac.uk

Other academic sessions were about the improvement of the user experience....mobile services; face book, twitter and second life and that sort of thing. I had not realized that currently second life is mostly a North American fad. Although those sessions did not explain too much that we have not all worried about, I did find the emphasis on visual literacy interesting. The papers in session 151 will give more details. But I had not really thought about the need for students to not only be print literate (we wish....texting is doing really strange things to language) and information literate, but also need to be able to design, build and manipulate images. Glad I went to college when I did....and not only because it was a good deal cheaper!

Other interesting sessions reviewed the roles various national libraries are taking in digital content provision and preservation. Interestingly, China seems to be trying to identify and collect content....and yet that nation certainly has its use restrictions. The session brought together information from Sweden, The Netherlands, Korea, China and Canada (session 132, National Libraries promoting open access to knowledge). It appears that Korea has a new and improved copyright law, as of March 2009.

The final session on copyright (142) was very intense. Two European experts examined all the studies and all the options. This was in addition to an extensive review of Creative Commons as potential solution including the issues that it raises that doesn't work so well. The fellow who did that review was hilarious (I do not think he meant to be....but he is dual phd in librarianship and law....poor fellow could not help himself). But his content was excellent and his call for an international and standardized method of managing digital content was certainly on the mark. His paper is actually in the earlier session 132....and I am sure that the entire paper is there.

Anyway, back to the session on copyright, I think what impressed me the most is the number of WIPO (World Intellectual Progress Organization) studies on the topic. If you really want to know what every country does about copyright.....it's in those studies (most recent done in 2008 and 2009). Bottom line: librarians are responsible for making sure activities around making content available are legally acceptable....no matter which country they are practicing librarianship in! Also the most recent study by Raquel Xalabarder for WIPO concluded that what makes digital content so much harder to figure out an international copyright policy for is that it moves beyond reproduction into communication because of the nature of the internet. That brings many more considerations into play. I had not thought about it in just that way.

The final session that I attended concluded with a presentation from a gentleman from France in French that was very interesting (no, I do not speak or read French, that is what translation devices do....). He was discussing the interface of library and museum exhibit activity with smart cell phones. Apparently they imbed in their exhibit text a code that a cell phone can connect to and download to the phone additional background content on the artifact, or exhibit. Pretty cool.....but hard to glean much more than the idea and concept through the translation.

Thanks for all the support....let me know if you have any questions.....take care all, GladysAnn

GladysAnn Wells
Director and State Librarian
Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records