IFLA – Information Technology Section
Report 2011 / 2013

The Information Technology Section (ITS) is committed to promote and advance the application of information technologies (IT) to library and information services in all societies, through activities related to standards, education and training, research and the marketplace.

In the last few years the members of the Standing Committee (SC) of the Information Technology Section (ITS) were involved in identifying emerging trends and recent IT development which have most impact in libraries; they tried to specify the urgent needs in developing countries in order to improve the access to and use of information. In this regard four main working areas were defined: open source, digital preservation, RFID and semantic web. For these areas convenors were nominated to organize the work on these fields during the year. On additional meetings during IFLA conferences, main actions and directions to be taken in order to help interested communities were decided upon. The positive outcome of the subgroups' activities was joining of experts with professional experiences from within and outside the SC in order to share their experiences, and to create discussion forums for the interested communities with their voluntary engagement. Clustering of SC members into working groups has shown to be very a successful form of action, and they availed their deeper involvement and better interactions on specific areas.

OPEN SOURCE

In the area of open source we have had a successful cooperation with the Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section (LRSPS) during the last few years. Dr Edmund Balnaves took part in their training program, and in the publication of their Handbook on Information and Communication Technologies in Parliamentary Libraries; the publication can be useful to other libraries, too.

In 2012, we organized jointly with the LRSPS, a session dedicated to the mobile technology; a special attention was paid to the problem of usability and accessibility. The reason for the chosen topic was that this technology is emerging in both, developed and underdeveloped areas. It might be an important alternative for access to information in the areas with no access or bad access to the internet.

In Singapore we focussed on solutions emerging from open source. The initial idea was that there are communities that develop open source solutions which could compete with commercial solutions, and might be used by the library community.

During the last few years we have been trying to implement the initiative referring to creation of a working group for small libraries in developing countries. In Singapore, new SC members decided to take over this initiative. In addition, the idea of publishing a handbook for these libraries arose. The publication committee has been set up, and soon the project will be submitted to the IFLA Professional Committee for funding.

DIGITAL PRESERVATION

The topic of digital preservation is very important; however, it is mostly of interest to bigger libraries like national, regional or some university libraries. In this respect we had to find a broader scope in order to involve different interested communities. As consequence, we organized a session on Digital disaster planning and recovery for digital libraries in Helsinki.

Since it is more than one decade after the first attempts of establishing a digital preservation practice, we considered that in many national libraries this process has been differently integrated in the library workflow, mainly with physical preservation. This was also the topic of a joint session with the Preservation and Conservation Section, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, and the LRSPS organized in Singapore.

For the next WLIC in Lyon in 2014 it was decided to organize a joint session with the Preservation and Conservation Section on the topic of e-books preservation.

RFID

There has been a great interest in the RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) during the last few years. After ten years of its implementation, almost ten thousand libraries across the world have been using this kind of technology. The RFID Special Interest Group has been active since its establishment in Puerto Rico in 2011. In Helsinki, a very successful session was organized. Unfortunately, the main convenor of the SIG, Mr Frank Seeliger, of the Technical University of Applied Sciences, Wildau, Germany, was not able to attend the IFLA conference in Singapore, consequently no special session was organized. See: http://www.ifla.org/rfid

SEMANTIC WEB

The IT Section has created and has been sponsoring the Semantic Web Special Interest Group since its first Discussion group. It was created at the IFLA WLIC in Puerto Rico in 2011. It is intended for the application of semantic web standards like RDF and OWL to library data, and applications and the development of linked data in libraries. The interest in this SIG is growing - not only participants would like to get more basic information on this topic, experts as well are willing to share their experiences from the practice. In addition to the organization of a two-hours session at the annual IFLA conferences, a satellite meeting on *User interaction built on library linked data* (UILLD) preceding the main IFLA conference in Singapore was organized (See: http://ifla2013satellite.nlb.sg/it/). The report by this SIG is available at: http://www.ifla.org/swsig. Another satellite meeting on linked data ("*Linked Data in Libraries: let's make it happen!*") is planned for IFLA WLIC in Lyon in 2014. The SWSIG as well as the IT Section have been closely cooperating with the Namespaces Technical Group.

OTHER ISSUES

In addition to the defined areas of activities, the ITS dealt with other topics on which the SC members expressed their interest and concern. Among them is the influence of the IT on professional development in libraries, which was the topic of a joint session with the Education and Training Section in Helsinki in 2012.

As the Chair of the IT section my concern has been to implement the strategic objectives adopted at the SC meetings in cooperation with the members of the SC. The Strategic Plan has been updated in 2011 and 2013 in accordance with the IFLA Key initiatives (See: http://www.ifla.org/publications/information-technology-section-strategic-plan). We had some difficulties in reporting on the priority action of the IT Section, since information technology is present in all library segments and activities.

The transition of IFLA to a new information platform has left consequences on the publication of the ITS Newsletter. The adopted official IFLA HQ template did not lend itself to the newsletter format. The Information Coordinator has had a lot of difficulties in adjusting the content to the new IFLA requirements. As an interim measure, the newsletter was published in the standard layout as an index

to the content which was hosted externally. In order to attract broader public the title of the newsletter from ITS Newsletter changed into *Trends and Issues in Library Technology* (TILT) as suggested by our Information Officer.

New officers of the ITS SC I were elected at the Singapore meeting: Dr Edmund Balnaves, Chair, Dr Lars Svensson, Secretary and May Chang, Information Officer.

by Alenka Kavčič-Čolić, Chair of the IT section from 2011-2013