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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS
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BEIJING, CHINA, 1996
Committee Report on Information Technology
By WILDA B. NEWMAN

The Science-Technology Division of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) has two current members elected to the IFLA Standing Committee on Information Technology (IT)-- Monica Ertel and Wilda Newman. Other current US members include Sally McCallum and Evelyn Murphy, as well as Honorary Member H. D. Avram. Other countries represented on the committee include Italy, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, Malaysia, Japan, Norway, Turkey, and Peru. Committee membership is limited to 20, and typically the IT has most of its members in attendance at the General Conference, a requirement for nomination. IT usually has several observers that often participate in the committees discussions and program planning.

IT Program offerings this year included an open session on "Digital Libraries, Technologies and Organizational Impacts," with Serge Salom of Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, speaking on "La BNF: une nouvelle bibliothèque, un nouveau systeme d'information"; Kenji Uetsuki, Planning Division, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan, on "Digital Library Projects in the NDL"; Terry Kuny, Global Village Research, IFLANet Administration, National Library of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, "Myths and Challenges for Digital Library Development"; and Art Pasquenelli, Sun-Micro-Systems, USA, "Digital Libraries." The IT workshop, joint with the Universal Dataflow and Telecommunications (UDT), was "Connections and Collaborations: Using the Internet in Libraries." Topics were: introduction to the Internet, effective use of Internet e-mail, design of web pages, and making information available through IFLANET.

The IT Section has completed and distributed its brochure in the five IFLA official languages. Last year, English, French, and Spanish were available, and this year Russian and German were distributed. Yakov Shraiberg, Moscow, provided the Russian translation and Hans-Christoph Hobohm provided the German. For Spanish, Jesus Lau, Juarez, Mexico; for French, Christian Lupovici, Noisy Le Grand, France, and the original brochure, in English, was written by Wilda Newman, Maryland, USA. A delightful surprise occurred when Shahar Banum Jaafar, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, announced that she had taken the brochure from last year's meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey, translated it into Malay, and distributed it to all of the libraries in.
Malaysia. She will further distribute the brochure to Indonesian librarians.

The brochure is now in need of updating and will be done along with IFLA’s Medium-Term Programme 1998 - 2001 and changes to IT’s scope and goals. Wilda Newman has the action to update the brochure, coordinate the translations, production, and distribution. She will also coordinate the changes with Ms. Jaafer for the Malay copy, Leigh Swain, IT chair-person, will work with Ms. Newman to coordinate the textual change relative to the Medium-Term Programme.

There were several different topics, programs, and projects proposed “by” IT members, and others proposed “to” IT to its chair-person and others at the conference. IT usually has a lot to offer, and several units like to prepare joint programs with IT, bringing technology aspects into information delivery, and associated topics of IFLA’s current Medium-Term Programme. Suggestions included: A pre-conference, "Bridging Gaps through Information Technology," directed toward 25 selected nominees specifically from developing countries (as identified in the IFLA regions) that will also be sponsored for the IFLA General Conference. The four day pre-conference was approved for IT sponsorship. It will cover such topics as connectivity and information technology, Internet and IFLANet, and Country specific reports in these areas during day one. Day two will be a hands-on training day for IFLANet and the Internet, upgrading the technical infrastructure of your library, with public and research library speakers on this topic. Networking at the national level will be done in working groups on the third day, and the fourth day will conclude with special needs and requirements, preservation, and the need for library education, as well as other topics.

A workshop or open session with public libraries was suggested on Internet Resources as a mainstream library information resource, and freenet, with focus on an example of such a program as the one at the Cleveland Public Library. Another topic noted was from the Statistic Section on library and information statistics and use in electronic resources. It will encourage the Statistics Section to proceed with this subject either as a workshop or as an open session. The Finnish Library Association (IFLA) is proposing a satellite meeting in Helsinki, in association with the Copenhagen Conference on the "planning of campus libraries, including physical facilities, as well as virtual or electronic libraries." It is expected that the Nordic libraries would be a heavy contributor to this meeting. It will encourage the IFLA to proceed with this planning. Sections on Audio Visual, Buildings, Conservation, and IT will sponsor a workshop on the "Impact of preservation of digital material."

Sessions were also discussed for library automation and software applications for developing countries, or library systems in developing countries, and these may be addressed as part of the pre-conference IFLA program, and even continued as an open session at the General IFLA Conference. Another area discussed was "Library Standards – Protocol Standards in interlibrary loan (ILL) in the electronic environment," put forth by the Association of Research Libraries and the Section on ILL. A presentation will also be considered on Z39.50, "Information Retrieval Application Service Definition and Protocol Specification for Open Systems"
Interconnection.” Further discussion brought out topics on the future of data formats with cataloging; various levels of access to information depending on country and their infrastructure along with the design of web pages, and the need for standards; digital libraries and making available large digital volumes of material and what the impact is for users and libraries.

All of these topics are of interest and while all cannot be addressed in a single year, they can be handled over a period of one to three years. Topics on creation for access of digitized information, Z39 with ILL standards, and possible development of a “road show” for addressing Internet use and associated topics by region will be addressed for the 1998 program.

New projects for IT will include phase III of the “GUI Standards Project--Bibliographic Database Applications Icons,” under Project Head, Wilda Newman, Johns Hopkins University, Applied Physics Laboratory, USA and Project Support, Bruce Royan, Stirling, Scotland, Leigh Swain, National Library of Canada, and Universal Dataflow and Telecommunications (UDT) IFLA Core Programme focal point, and IT chairperson, will also assist in this project.

The project is to move the standard icon set concluded in phases I and II into the standards domain worldwide to ensure its adoption for use in bibliographic information systems. That is, the project will work through the IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force), ISO, and ANSI, to further promote and enter this effort into the process of formalizing the adoption of this set of icon standards. The project requests that IFLA, as an organization, should also assume a role in support of the effort toward adoption of this standard. The project will also continue to work with vendors and services within the library and information center communities to further the use of these icons in their product offerings at the grassroots level to gain further use and acceptance of the icon set.

Wilda Newman also took the action item to obtain translation of the “alt commands” for the text substitute of the icon set into the five official languages of IFLA.

The GUI report covering phases I and II of the project was presented to the IT Standing Committee at the Beijing Conference in August 1996. It will also be translated into French by IT committee member Mrs. M. Chazal, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, for publication in a French journal. The report will also be available on IFLANet in both English and French.

Mrs. Chazal will also translate IT minutes and other publications into French for IFLANet. The section would like to see more of its work translated into the five IFLA languages for further distribution and involvement in the Sections work.

A second project proposed by Mr. Yakov Schraiberg, Russia, with Uri Orlov, Russian State Library, concerns Cyrillic code and the Internet. This would begin phase I as a small project.

The Internet Discussion Group met Sunday, August 25, 1996, and had several very lively discussion groups on different topics. The results of that session will be summarized and made available on IFLANet. Monica Ertel was moderator for that session, and Wilda Newman attended. Wilda announced the GUI project to the delegates and provided the address on the
Internet or their access and feedback to this process. It is:

http:\\LORNE.STIR.AC.UK\CONSTD\n
Both Monica and Wilda took information back from this session to the IT planning meetings for inclusion in the 1997 and 1998 conferences. The Internet Discussion Group was particularly relevant to the Internet Workshops that have been given the last few years at IFLA, and also to the "have" and "have nots" when it comes to access to information and infrastructure of the various countries around the world.

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