



IFLA Professional Statement on Universal Bibliographic Control

During the 1970's IFLA established an office for Universal Bibliographic Control following several years of discussion about the importance of international sharing of bibliographic data to help reduce costs and to encourage greater cooperation worldwide. That office became known as UBCIM (Universal Bibliographic Control and International MARC). At that time the philosophy was that each national bibliographic agency would catalog the works published in its own country and establish the names of its authors, and that data would be shared and re-used around the world.¹ However, in the 1990's it was recognized that having data in a language and script users can understand is extremely important, so respecting the cultural diversity of users around the world should be addressed as well. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive conditions, as has been demonstrated in the subsequent Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) initiative. Web technologies offer new possibilities of sharing data at a global scale and beyond the library domain, but also show a need for authoritative and trusted data. Thus, the concept of UBC is still valid and worth IFLA's continued support and promotion.

IFLA therefore reaffirms the following principles:

- A National bibliographic agency (NBA) has the responsibility for providing the authoritative bibliographic data for publications of its own country and for making that data available to other NBAs, libraries, and other communities (for instance archives and museums) through appropriate and timely services with the goal of increasing open access to the bibliographic data;
- NBAs, as a part of the creation of authoritative bibliographic data, also have the responsibility for documenting authorized access points for persons, families, corporate bodies, names of places, and authoritative citations for works related to its own country and for making that authority data available to other NBAs, libraries, and other communities (for instance archives and museums);
- IFLA has the responsibility for maintaining and promoting the *Statement of International Cataloguing Principles (ICP)*, published in 2009, as the foundation for the sharing of bibliographic data;
- IFLA has, through the work of its relevant professional units and advisory committees, the responsibility for creating, maintaining and promoting bibliographic standards and guidelines to facilitate this sharing of bibliographic and authority data (e.g., ISBD, the FRBR family of conceptual models, etc.) ;
- IFLA works collaboratively with other international organizations (e.g., ISO, ICA, ICOM, etc.) in the creation and maintenance of other standards in order to ensure that library standards developments, including compatible data models, are coordinated with those of the wider community.

¹ Readers interested in the UBC history are directed to the following resources: Dorothy Anderson, "Universal Bibliographic Control : a long term policy, a plan for action" Pullach/Muenchen : Verlag Dokumentation, 1974. 87 p. There is also a report from IFLA for the Unesco Intergovernmental Conference of 1974 that includes a chapter more briefly describing UBC (pages 10-12: "IFLA and the role of libraries" published by IFLA in 1974. 38 p.

In 2003 the UBCIM core activity was closed and the coordination of bibliographic standardization was moved to the IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards (ICABS), which was later changed to the IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Digital Strategies (ICADS). In 2011 it was decided to discontinue ICADS. During the 2011 WLIC conference the idea arose of revitalizing UBC and the Bibliography Section took on this task.