International Federation of Library Association and Institutions

Information Point
The Government Libraries Section Newsletter

Contents

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Editorial Note:
This is the official newsletter of the Government Libraries Section of IFLA. It is published twice yearly. The newsletter may be reproduced and printed in electronic formats without permission, provided acknowledgement is made. Views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Section Officers or the Editor.

We would like to see more global representation and would welcome a volunteer from each continent to supply a continental update or perspective to the newsletter – if you are interested please contact the Editor.   Copy may be submitted to the Editor, Jane M. Wu at janemarywu@yahoo.com in plain ASCII text format, in MS Word or in the body of an email message. Accompanying photographs are welcome.

FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback to the newsletter editor at janemarywu@yahoo.com.

Chair's Column Summer
Greetings to All! We are just a few weeks away from yet another annual IFLA conference. For the past six months many of us in the Section have been working behind the scenes to bring about a memorable, educational conference. Thanks for all your hard work and constant communications.

New Members The February 2009 elections were a resounding success and the Government Libraries Section has seven new members from such diverse places as Spain, France, Japan, Mali, Sweden, and Australia. We hope to meet our members in Milan and show you the "ins and outs" of IFLA and help you to get the most out of our annual conference. We now have 18 elected members for our Section and two corresponding members.

Conference Papers The overall theme of the 2009 IFLA conference is "Libraries Create Futures: Building on Cultural Heritage." In following this greater theme, the Government Libraries Section determined that its sub-theme for the papers to be presented in its program will be on

"Transforming Learning Cultures: Government Libraries As the Treasures Within." Through a four month long process of receiving abstracts and communicating with potential speakers, we selected six papers for presentation. The speakers represent government libraries in China, India, Iran, Malawi, and Spain. These papers will be presented during our program on Tuesday, August 25 from 13:45-15:45. We look forward to having you join us!

Conference Activities During the Milan conference we will be electing Section officers for the 2009-2011 term. We will also start our preliminary planning for the 2010 Göteborg, Sweden conference. The dates of the 2010 conference will be August 14-19 and the overall theme will be "Libraries: Engaging, Embracing, Empowering." We will be selecting our own sub-theme for the conference around which our papers will focus.

In This Issue I have asked all Government Libraries Section members to write brief accounts of the various professional conferences they attended throughout the year. There are so many international and national conferences which most of us are unable to attend so this will be one way of sharing content, ideas, and perceptions. Those accounts are included in this issue along with other pieces on some of the interesting activities going on in the libraries in which Government Libraries Section members work.

Finally, I cannot end this column

without talking about **Food in Milan**. You will discover that Italy is more than pasta. While in Lombardia and the Province of Milano, enjoy the antipasti, risotto Milanese, the cheeses, pumpkin seed pesto, fragrant olive oils, breads, salamis, and the endless varieties of piadinas – a tortilla-like lunch sandwich filled with whatever your taste buds desire. And, most of all, don't forget that in Italy gelato is a food group! Take time to savor the foods of Milan!

Join us in our business meetings and our paper presentation program in Milan! Here's to a superb 2009 IFLA conference!

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From our Secretary and Treasurer…

Reflections and a thank you – my time on the Government Libraries Section Committee

In late May 2009 I started a new role, as Director of Information Services at the University in Aberystwyth. This meant that as well as leaving a job that I loved (albeit to take up a fantastic new role) I was returning to the university library sector - bringing my work in Government libraries to an end. This means that I'll be leaving the Government Libraries Section which I've been proud to serve as Treasurer and Secretary. To end my time with the Section I wanted to write a brief thank you and reflect on the benefits the Section has given me both

personally and professionally.

On a personal level, I can clearly remember my trepidation when I submitted a brief abstract for the pre-IFLA Section Conference in Stockholm, *2004.* Maija Jussilainen and Inger Jepsson responded quickly and invited me to speak – and I was terrified! Having only worked in the government sector for just under 2 years I felt that this pre-conference was my first real opportunity to participate and collaborate with my global community of colleagues, but what could I share as a newcomer to the sector? On arrival at Stockholm the friendliness, cheerful and positive approach of the attendees and organisers reassured me that I was among friends. Presenting my paper I realised that I was in a room with colleagues who were interested and eager to support me as I described the developments to my service, giving me useful relevant suggestions. The other presentations and conversations gave me insight into new ways of working, and the common struggles that government libraries have to ensure their relevance to users is maintained and their importance recognised. It was a truly inspirational experience, that sustained me as I returned to my library, bringing new ideas and ambitions for what we could become.

My involvement in the conference in Korea deepened my relationship with the committee and sowed the seeds for me to host a mid-term conference on the production of the *Guidelines for Government Libraries* in Cardiff. This was such an exciting experience, both personally and professionally. For our

service in the Welsh Assembly Government it raised our profile internally, demonstrating that we operated within a global community who respected our contribution and allowed us to learn from their experience. Senior staff at the Assembly recognised how important these relationships were, and were impressed by the international range of colleagues who joined us. On a personal level I won't forget the pleasure I had in getting to meet the colleagues from the Swedish libraries who arrived a day early for the event. By chance, Nancy Bolt (then Chair), and I were sat in an outside café when we recognised a gang of our Swedish colleagues walking past! They joined us, and as we sat together to share dinner I couldn't stop smiling – what a wonderful sense of community we have – what an amazing support network the Section provides!

 In the subsequent years I took on the role of Secretary and Treasurer, expanding my skills and understanding of government library work - I have to strongly recommend contributing in roles like this to expand your portfolio of experience and competencies – as I have found the "safe" environment of friendly advice such a welcome catalyst to enhancing my professional role and realising my career ambitions. I've also felt that I've been able to "give something back", helping proposers in submitting papers and offering my experience and advice to section members when they've used the email lists to call for help.

 I'd like to thank all of the committee and section members for the support

and companionship they have provided over the years. I feel part of the global government librarian community – and hope to keep in touch with the work of the section and you're all welcome to Aberystwyth.

With best wishes for the future of the section.

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SLA-ASIAN CHAPTER

International Conference of Asian Special Libraries(ICoASL 2008) New Delhi (India), 26th - 28th November 2008

Report by Sanjay K Bihani

Introduction: The Special Libraries Association is one of the largest international associations with 13,000 members in 83 countries with 58 chapters and 25 divisions. **The Asian chapter of SLA** is one of the biggest chapters, covering a large geographical area consisting of over 20 countries, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China,

Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Asian chapter has the following plans:

1. Networking of all Asian Libraries.
2. To organize Annual Meetings of Asian Libraries.
3. To organize workshops/seminars in the region.
4. To provide guidelines and professional support to Asian Libraries.
5. To provide training for information professionals.
6. To create a common platform for the Asian region.
7. To raise funds for Chapter activities.
8. To support SLA activities by increasing the Asian membership.
9. To organize visits by Members to Libraries in Asian countries.

Theme: The overall theme of the conference was "**Shaping the future of Special Libraries: beyond boundaries**" and it is organized by SLA-Asian chapter in association with the Society for Library professionals (SLP) and the Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centers (IASLIC). The conference was organized at India Islamic Cultural Centre, 87-88, Lodhi Road, New Delhi (India) from 26th to 28th November 2008

The technological developments in the past three decades radically transformed the information management environment. There is an urgent need to comprehensively review the Library and Information Service (LIS) profession. The technological marvels like the Internet, online services, CD-ROMs, and electronic databases have facilitated access to vast quantities of information from remote locations. However, this has resulted in information overload. As a result, greater expertise is now needed to retrieve and analyze relevant information. The information field today has a wider scope and it has come out of the precincts of libraries and information centres. As a matter of fact, information has become an industry that sells, organizes and processes information. The profession now has a window of opportunity to assert the need for investment in library and information services for an information enabled "innovation" and "knowledge nation." What is required is rediscovery of professional mission, values and commitment focused through one well-resourced association of library and information professionals and their institutions. For organizations to compete effectively in the knowledge economy they need to change their values and establish a new focus on creating and using intellectual assets to acquire new combinations of skills. In particular, they need to learn skills that allow them to find, manage, share and use information and knowledge. They need information literacy. Management of libraries and information centers in the modern era characterized by a significant variety of styles and is extended, beyond the typical issues of organization and administration of human and material resources, into issues of technology,

innovation and activity in shaping the components of the Information Society. So, the limits of modern Management of Libraries, includes the Management of Services, the Management of Information and the Management of Access.

Objectives: The principal objective of this international event was to provide a platform for cooperation among information professionals in Asia with a global perspective. The other objectives were:

- To ensure that information professionals are aware of the latest developments in the library and information field.

- To Promote the Special Libraries Association and increase its activities and role among library and information professionals in the Asian Region.

- Bring together the dispersed special community of the library professionals through a common platform to share experiences.

- Promote special libraries and special library professionals.

- Strengthen academic collaboration and strategic alliances for the development of special libraries.

- Facilitate interaction between experts and non-experts to bridge the knowledge gap between developing and developed countries.

- Help to develop a roadmap for the rapid and continuous growth of the library and information science society.

Sessions and Events: Welcome address was given by Mr Debal C. Kar, President, SLA Asian Chapter and Fellow, TERI, New Delhi. There was an address by Dr P R Goswami, Organising Secretary of the ICoASL 2008 and a Keynote address by Mr A Srinivasan from TCS. The conference was inaugurated by Prof B B Bhattacharya, Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University. In his inaugural address he emphasized the role of libraries for academic institutions and also for research. In his presidential address, Mr Stephen Abram, President of Special Libraries Assocition, emphasized the role of SLA in the development of LIS activities worldwide. He also emphasized the SLA-Asian Chapter's role for special libraries in the region.

The conference was attended by more than 300 delegates and participants. However, most of the delegates are from different parts of India but delegates from Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, China, USA and some other countries were also present. During every session there were one or two invited papers or talks by eminent professionals and 3 to 6 papers were presented.

The first day's sessions were dedicated to "Information Resources and Services", "Resource Sharing and networking" and "Information Literacy and Rural Information services". There were product presentations

from Nature Publishing Group, Ebrary, Springer and ProQuest. A cultural evening was organized with entertainment from Rajasthan and some other parts of Northern India and at the end of the day there was a conference dinner sponsored by Dow Jones.

The second day started with a keynote address by Dr Krishan Lal of National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi and the main sessions were dedicated to "Digital Libraries and Preservation," "Corporate Libraries and Information Marketing," and "Web 2.0 and LIS Marketing." A poster session was organized in the afternoon and a panel Discussion took place in the evening on "the Role of Library Associations". At the end of the day, a meeting of all SLA members was organized and about 100 members participated in the discussion.

The third and last day was started with a keynote address by Jack W. Plunkett on the theme " Plunkett's top 10 global business trends you must know about to succeed." The day's sessions were dedicated to the "LIS profession", "e-learning and distance learning" and "special sibrary sase studies." A panel discussion in the evening was on the theme "LIS career and opportunities."

The conference was successful in meetings its objectives.

Sanjay K Bihani works in Ministry of External Affairs at New Delhi. He is a Standing Committee Member of IFLA - Government

Libraries Section. He is also a member of the CLM Committee of IFLA and Editorial Committee of IFLA Journal. He may be contacted at alio@mea.gov.in or bihanisk@hotmail.com

Author attending the Conference (ICoASL 2008)

**Delegates during Conference
(ICoASL 2008)**

Buzzwords for the Information Professional – 2009

In June 2009 I attended the 100th anniversary conference of the Special Libraries Association (www.sla.org). It is always so exhilarating to get wrapped up in the hundreds of meetings and learning events; to network with colleagues and make new friends; and to bring back new or tried and true ideas into the workplace. But most of all, I listen for the new lingo, the buzzwords, of our profession. One often hears buzzwords at a conference months before they become mainstreamed.

Here are some of the buzzwords and more for the information professional from the 2009 SLA conference with attribution when known.

Digital Native – Those individuals a generation removed from most of us who were born after the internet and digital technology. They have always sent text messages, known MP3 players, blogged, had a Facebook page and "tweeted." Although coined in 2001, the word has just recently become widely used once again. Digital natives are sometimes referred to as "NetGen" – of the internet generation. – Mary Ellen Bates

Unconference – Although this word has been around for a decade, this is the first time it has been practiced in high volume at an SLA conference. Primarily used in the geek community, an unconference is an alternative to a typical conference event with its high fees, structure, and sponsored presentations. In the case of this SLA conference, seven unconference sessions were held within the parameters of the main conference for 90 minutes each. The topics of discussion were determined by the participants.

Transformational Leadership – Renowned author, Steve Denning, spoke to us on his concept of "Transformational Leadership: Inspirational Language." Mr. Denning stated that most of us have a confirmation bias, that is, we hear things which confirm what we already believe and we find ingenious ways to dismiss anything that doesn't fit with our existing world view no matter how compelling the evidence. Transformational leadership centers around communicating ideas through storytelling. A well told story can communicate a complex idea and

trigger action. A leader should be able to demonstrate understanding of a situation by demonstrating with a springboard story – a clear story that is a jumping off point for one's past experiences and ideas.

Geek the Library – Having heard this for the first time and without any preconception as to its meaning, I explored this further. The 'Geek the Library' campaign was made possible by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It highlights what people are passionate about and how libraries can support them in an effort to heighten awareness about the critical funding issues facing public libraries. The 'Geek the Library' project is a community-based public awareness campaign aimed at spreading the word about the vital and growing role of your public library in the greater community. The aim is for everybody to tell people what you geek, how the public library supports you and your community, and that everyone in your community benefits from the services your local library provides. http://www.geekthelibrary.org

Sunk-Cost Fallacy -- When one makes a hopeless investment, one sometimes reasons: *I can't stop now, otherwise what I've invested so far will be lost.* This is true but irrelevant for everything one has invested is lost regardless. If there is no hope for success in the future from the investment, then the fact that one has already lost a bundle should lead one to the conclusion that the rational thing to do is to withdraw from the project.

To continue to invest in a hopeless project is irrational. The book, *Why Smart People Make Big Money Mistakes – And How to Correct Them: Lessons from the New Science of Behavioral Economics,* NY: Simon and Schuster, 1999 by Gary Belsky and Thomas Gilovich, provides numerous twentieth century examples of the sunk-cost fallacy. As library managers we should learn to recognize the sinking signs and get out to minimize the damage to ourselves and the organization.

Retweet – We all know about Twitter and when using Twitter one "tweets" but now we have retweet. (Try saying this quickly 3 times.) To retweet is not to repeat your tweet as one might expect but it is the method by which one promotes another blogger's content. There is proper etiquette and form for retweeting. A simple guide to retweeting is available at http://bloggingbits.com/the-art-and-science-of-retweeting-for-twitteraholics.

Websites
Three websites/search engines were all the buzz at the conference. Here's my take on Bing.com, Biznar.com, and Google Wave.

www.bing.com – This new search engine is Microsoft's attempt to compete with Google. Technically it is a rebranding of Microsoft's Live Search but with many new features. Carried over from Live Search are the hotspots, Instant Answers, xRank and many video and image search capabilities. What's new? Web groups affect the way results appear and

certain search terms will have results that are categorized. One neat feature is called Quick Previews which allows searchers to mouseover results and see more related information from the site behind the result. Microsoft says "up to 24% of clicks result in a quick search back to search results because searchers quickly realize a page isn't what they are looking for." Bing.com is still in its infancy and as one blogger comments, "B.I.N.G – But It's Not Google."

www.biznar.com – This could prove to be a good alternative to Google and other internet search engines when searching for business topics on the internet. You can search blogs, wikis, business research, news, and government information. The search results provide clustering by topics on the left-hand side of the screen and you can also check off the documents you want from the results list to compile them together.

Google Wave – Just a couple of months ago, Google unveiled Google wave, its personal communication and collaboration tool. It is an open-sourced product where people may communicate and work together with richly formatted text, photos, videos, maps, and more. While collaborating a participant may reply anywhere in the message, edit the content and add participants at any point in the process. According to Google, wave is a live transmission and as you type, participants on a wave can have faster conversations, see edits and interact in real-time. To learn more about Google wave, go to http://wave.google.com.
  -- Jerry W. Mansfield

Changes in the Manner in Which We Do Business: Proposals from Around the World

The winds of change seem to be more active than ever before and we believe it is important for our members to be informed and prepared to provide alternate proposals if justified. To this end, our Section Newsletter, *Information Point*, will devote some space each issue to reporting on these changes and actions taken by librarians to improve the outcome. What is happening in your administration? Please let us know. Send an email report to me at janemarywu@yahoo.com.

From Laurie Atkinson Manager Business Information Centre | VicRoads, Kew, Australia we learned, "Government libraries are under review in Victoria, the Australian state where I work. The Government is working toward establishing a central Victorian Government Library Service. This will mean amalgamating 13 different library services. We are not sure exactly how this will happen, or what it will look like at the end of the process. Our association, the Victorian Government Library Association (ViGLA), is providing advice to the project team. We are particularly keen to maintain the integrity of library services for government staff. Here is an excerpt from [their] proposal:
'ViGLA challenges the assertion that 'a simplified…library service across Government' is a benefit. ViGLA's interpretation of this concept is one of degradation of specialised knowledge, research and information services,

with corresponding negative impact on department and agency output. Efficient provision of information services requires tailored and specialised knowledge and information resources delivery for individual departments."

Early on in the project (February 2009) I shared the IFLA Government Libraries Section's *Guidelines for Government Libraries* with the DTF project team in hopes they would help to develop their proposal.

Best wishes,
Laurie
Chair, ViGLA

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At the Swedish Government Offices we have one organisational body for the library services to 13 ministries. Ministries in Sweden do not include local authorities - some of them have their own libraries, but only a small number. The ministries are also geographically situated close to one another.

Presently we have 3 different libraries at the Government Offices but we have started the planning and the process towards one library. That library will be completed in 2012.

From 1996-1998 we consolidated 5 libraries/library services and left 4

ministries without their own library and librarian. Ten years later, we consider this to be working well and our clients are pleased. The present library has a broad and deep collection with a professional staff. Our consolidated library catalogue records material from all libraries and we can deliver material to all offices within 10-30 minutes of a request. The far-reaching development of databases and other electronic media resources have facilitated this process.

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