



Reference and Information Services Section *Annual Report 2004-2005*

Submitted by Annsophie Oscarsson, Chair

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United States

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Ms Susan McKnight
Australia

Corresponding Member

Ms Marta Terry
Cuba

During 2004-2005 the following persons resigned from the Standing Committee: Josje Calff, Andrea Delumeau, and Suzanne D. Gyeszly. Anne Grodzins Lipow died in November 2004. One of the Corresponding Members, Susan McKnight changed position and was involved in other activities within IFLA.

Mission statement according to Strategic Plan 2004-2005

The Reference Work Section addresses all aspects of reference work, in all types of libraries, in all regions of the world with emphasis on unrestricted availability of information. The Section's aims are to bridge the gap between the physical and the digital library, to promote life-long learning and information literacy in all aspects of the knowledge sharing process, and to support library staff around the world with standards and guidelines for reference service.

Areas of special interests are as follows:

- User-centered reference services
- Organization and staffing of reference services
- Ethics of high quality service
- Provision of high quality service
- Impact of the digital environment on reference services
- Reference collections in a digital world
- Continuing education and training of library staff
- Marketing/Visibility of library reference services
- Provision of an information forum on the nature of reference work in different parts of the world
- Democracy-building role of reference services

Name change of the Reference Work Section

With regard to the changing information environment, the Standing Committee found that the concept "reference work" was no longer a relevant label of the kind of issues that our section covers. In order to better reflect the multifaceted user services' component of our work and also to translate into other languages, the Standing Committee applied for a name change of the section. The section's name was changed into Reference and Information Services Section.

In 2004-2005, the SC planned and carried out the following activities:

Midwinter meeting, Rome March 11-12, 2005

A Midwinter meeting was held in Rome on March 11. The main issue on the agenda was the strategic planning for the next two years. The Standing Committee discussed the strategic goals for the period 2006-2007, and issued a draft Strategic Plan to be discussed at the Oslo meetings. On March 12, attendees participated in a joint Workshop on Digital Reference Services hosted by the Italian Library Association (AIB). Committee members shared information on digital services in their own countries and Paola Garagiulo talked about preservation in Italian libraries. After the Workshop, the participants enjoyed a delicious lunch, hosted by the AIB. During the Rome visit, SC-members also had the opportunity of visiting the Vatican Library.

Annual conference Oslo, Norway, 14-18 August 2005

[World Library and Information Congress: 71st IFLA General Conference and Council](#)

Open session

The Open Session this year was based on presentations of Reference and Information Services from different point of views from a variety of countries. The 6 speakers formed a panel inviting the audience to a lively discussion on topics such as user satisfaction, staffing issues, management issues, staffing and training and least but not less visions for the future.

Reference and Information Services

Virtual versus face-2-face. Reference and information services - a personal service delivered to the 'invisible' user via library portals

Moderator: GITTE LARSEN (The Royal School of Library and Information Science, Copenhagen, Denmark)

- [A question about Switzerland? SwissInfoDesk](#)
Français Deutsch
JEAN-PHILIPPE ACCART (Swiss National Library, Bern, Switzerland)
- [Utilizing virtual reference to serve multitype library patrons](#)
Français
EVA LUNNEBORG (National Library of Sweden, Stockholm, Sweden) and VINCE MARINER (College Center for Library Automation, Statewide Coordinator - Ask a Librarian (Florida) Tallahassee, Florida, USA)
- [People's Network Enquire: virtual reference in England](#)
Français
LINDA BERUBE (Co-East, Cambridgeshire, UK)
- [Virtual versus face-2-face reference: comparing users' perspectives on visits to physical and virtual reference desks in public and academic libraries](#)
KIRSTI NILSEN (University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada)
- Utilizing virtual reference to serve multitype library patrons
VINCE A. MARINER (College Center for Library Automation, Tallahassee, USA)
- [The re-invention of the reference enquiry service: a case study of the National Library Board, Singapore](#)
Français
RAJU BUDDHARJU (The National Library Board, Singapore)

The attendance at the programme was more than 450 people.

Poster session

A Poster session was presented with the following theme:

Toolkit for developing reference services

Presented by Martin Kesselman, Sarah Watstein and Linda Hartley

A wealth of information, including science and health, is available, and sometimes freely available, to developing countries. A major gap exists in some countries where library staffs do not have the reference skills needed to provide access to information that can directly benefit their countries economically and socially. Where services do exist, there is often a lack of standards and guidelines for library responsibilities and services. To assist librarians and decision makers in developing countries and elsewhere, the IFLA Reference and Information Services Section, through an IFLA project, has developed a toolkit. A toolkit is comprised of tools; in this case these tools are important web resources for libraries. The toolkit includes links to websites dealing with the needs for reference, planning a service, training, marketing, collaborations, and assessment. The poster highlights these elements with examples of resources and also identifies areas where resources are lacking to support reference in developing countries.

Satellite meeting

Prior to the conference a Satellite meeting in Järvenpää, Finland was held in cooperation with IFLA Library Building and Equipment Section and the Finnish Library Association. With the great number of library resources and services available remotely, why is the physical library building still important? The physical library need no longer be just a warehouse of information, but can become a place for interaction, learning, and community. This workshop explored some of the new and exciting ways library buildings focus on user needs such as an information commons, cybercafes, and self services. The programme was held on 11-12 August with the following title:

The Physical Library and Beyond - Library as Place and the Library in Cyberspace



[More information](#)

Projects

IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines

Translation of IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines into Swedish and German were added to the number of translations available at the IFLA website, which makes a total of 8 versions. Other versions besides the English original include: English, Chinese, Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish.

Reference Toolkit for Librarians in Developing Countries

To assist librarians and decision makers in developing countries, IFLA has funded a small project to develop a web-based toolkit to bring together existing and freely-available guidelines and other materials that can be utilized to develop reference services. The project was carried out by Martin Kesselman, Secretary of the IFLA Reference Work Section together with Sarah Watstein at Virginia Commonwealth University. The project was finished and presented as a Poster Session at the Oslo conference. The toolkit will be available from the Reference and Information Services Section's website.

Collaborative E-reference services

A world wide survey on collaborative e-reference services was made on behalf of the section and was compiled by the Department of Continuing Education & Consultancy, The Royal School of Library and Information Science in Denmark

<http://www.db.dk/kon/virref2005/>

Publications

The section's Newsletter was published in July:

[July 2005, Volume 4](#)

Section members

As of August 2005 there were 55 members registered for the Reference and Information Services Section.