

IFLA Information Literacy Contributions to the International Library Community

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Information literacy is an international challenge for society at large. The world community has the great need of having information literate citizens, people who can be benefit and can be active part of our knowledge society. The most important sector to play a role in information literacy is the educational sector, where academic and school libraries are an integral part of their learning systems. Their staff, librarians, are the prime information specialists who need to partner with faculty and teachers to facilitate the development of information competencies in their learning communities. The Information Literacy Section (InfoLit) of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has undertaken different actions to help librarians and information professionals to position their libraries in the information literacy arena at their parent institutions with UNESCO and IFLA funding. Among the main contributions reported at the annual World Information Congress, held in Seoul, South Korea in August 2006 (See pictures), are:

Guidelines on Information Literacy for Lifelong Learning. The Guidelines were released and uploaded for free downloading at www.ifla.org in August 2006. The preparation of the document was a key task undertaken by the InfoLit Chair and took over two years to draft them with participation from different professionals around the world. The document provides a conceptual template to guide the creation of information literacy (IL) programs in academic and school libraries, although most of the principles can also be applied to public libraries. It provides synoptic information to frame the IL efforts of educators, librarians and information facilitators, particularly from nations where IL is in the early stages of development. The Guidelines are also of value to anyone who may need to start an IL program and would like to have a general conceptual framework, regardless of their geographical location. The document can be reviewed, changed or adapted by librarians according to their institutional needs

so that IL elements can be better suited to local or national needs where local budget, policies, procedures, and priorities may be different. The only copyright requirement for the [use](#) of this document is to cite it.

IFLA / UNESCO Guidelines Funding. The initial funding of the International Literacy Guidelines Project was provided by UNESCO, and IFLA, the parent organization of the Information Literacy Section. Complementary funding was provided by the Universidad Veracruzana, and from the author responsible for the IL compilation project. The Guidelines are divided into ten chapters that comprise the organizational spectrum of information literacy work, including a definition of concepts, a proposal for information literacy standards, a section on obtaining institutional commitment, the management of the learning process, including personnel development, educational theories, among other basic topics on how to implement the program, plus a list of key IL terms with their definitions, and a bibliography for further reading. In most cases, each topic is briefly introduced, followed by paragraphs with lists of bulleted points and a graphic summarizing the processes involved. The writing style is simple and schematic for easy reading.



InfoLit Lunch Meeting, Seoul, So. Korea

International Information Literacy Resources Directory. The InfoLit Section has also created a web-based directory with UNESCO funds to serve as a focal point for the exchange of information literacy tools and outcomes that could be relevant to the international community, so that the best products/experiences can be used as model for organizations, institutions or individuals who require working on an IL project/program. Six Standing Committee members of the Information Literacy Section of IFLA volunteered to work on the project, plus a team of about 30 country contacts from around the world. The repertoire consists of a web database, where anyone can register their IL products. There are more than 500 records that can be freely accessed at: www.uv.mx/usbi_ver/unesco

International Information Literacy State-of-the-Art Report. Another major task has been the drafting of an international report that describes the status of information literacy around the world. The goal of this study is to identify international information literacy trends in five broad categories: resources for user education; publications devoted to the subject; organizations, such as associations and other professional groups; training programs for IL facilitators; and communication events, such as conferences and meetings. The first draft covers several countries and is posted at www.uv.mx/usbi_ver/unesco. A second draft will be uploaded during the first semester 2007. Volunteers are needed to write about Asia, Eastern Europe, Mediterranean Countries, North Africa, the Caribbean, if you have the knowledge and time, be part of this great project that will map IL efforts around the globe. The access to the report is free and open to improvements by anyone who is knowledgeable about their own countries or regions.

IL International Logo. The latest action to start by InfoLit is the branding campaign to create an international logo for information literacy. On behalf of UNESCO, InfoLit is inviting the world information and library community to draft the basis to create an international Logo to identify information literacy work. The aim of creating this Logo is to make communication easier between institutions that carry out information literacy projects and their communities/society in general. The Logo will be promoted as a free of charge brand, and as an international symbol of information literacy around the world. The Information Literacy Section Standing Committee / UNESCO invites other associations and institutions to endorse this call and propose designs. The full text of the Logo call is available at www.uv.mx/usbi_ver/unesco. The deadlines are yet to be set once funding is received.



IL Workshop: Cuba, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru. Another contribution

J. Lau (Chair, México); S. Chevillotte (Secretary, France); E. Tolonen (Information Officer, Finland); F. Babakisi (Botswana); V. Pedersen (Norway); J. Juanjos (Portugal); L. Goff (Program Convener, USA); and K. Sunden (Sweden).
Seoul, SK, Second Standing Committee Meeting, 2006

Gaborone, the week before the IFLA Durban Conference (South Africa). The final details of the workshop will be ready in early 2007, www.ifla.org

InfoLit Listserv. The Section also has recently created a listserv to discuss information literacy matters. The list is still to gain momentum with more members' participation, so that it becomes an international forum for information literacy matters. Those interested in being part of the list can register at: <http://infoserv.inist.fr/wwwsympa.fcgi/info/infolit-l>

Mexico's Information Competencies Conferences. The Section has also supported the organization of the last three Mexican Information Literacy Conferences, where Section Officers have played the role of speakers, the latest one was Christina Tovoté (Sweden) who spoke at the 2006 Conference, and Sylvie Chevillotte (France) and Viggo Pedersen (Norway) who took part in the 2004 meeting. The three of them are members of the Standing Committee. For more details of the conference visit: www.uacj.mx/dhi

Conclusion. The IFLA Information Literacy Section has taken an active role to assist libraries in their IL work. The main contributions are the Guidelines, the International Report, and the Resources Directory. These achievements are great tools for any librarian and information professional to improve or to start a new information literacy program. These actions undertaken by InfoLit have been accomplished thanks to the collaboration of the InfoLit Executive Officers, Standing Committee Members, members at large, and by a group of librarians and information professionals from different countries with the generous funding of UNESCO (More information about the section can be found at www.ifla.org).