50 years of IATUL: current status and achievements

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Abstract:
The author discusses the role of International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL) in providing leadership to the Information professionals in technological university libraries. An attempt is made to comprehend the present status of IATUL and analyze the activities and contribution it has made to overcome the range of challenges facing by tertiary level Technological libraries throughout the world. SWOT analysis is used to assess the achievements, failures and ascertain constraints. The author has relied on web sites as well as ephemeral material such as minutes, annual reports, newsletters, and memoranda to construct this article. Meeting and Interview with IATUL present and past presidents and other office bearers of the associations provided useful sources of information. It is also attempted to provide relevant information for those interested to join IATUL for professional development.

Key words: IATUL, Professional Association, Professional development, SWOT analysis

Introduction:
IATUL (International Association of Technological University Libraries) was founded at Dusseldorf, Germany, in May 1955. Since inception it has been playing an important role in conveying useful messages and guidelines for technological libraries development worldwide. Moreover, in this transitional era IATUL is acting as meeting places for professionals, helping them exchange opinions and promoting free access to information while facing a series of structural, political, cultural and financial challenges. In essence, a professional association provides a framework within which professionals belonging to a particular profession seek to practice their profession. It also sets standards to be followed in all aspects viz. education, up-lifting the professional status, certification, code of conduct etc. As the freedom of information and open access become a reality there is a wide spread recognition about the role of library associations in educating and empowering the professional communities. Traditional bureaucratic hierarchical models of library associations have been heavily criticized as being to inflexible to deliver products and services. The library and Information profession is facing a crisis and there is an urgent need to modernize the profession's associations and make them more effective and caring about the members.

Today IATUL have to:
- provide a leading role in discussions about open access to information, user rights, freedom of expression, management of intellectual property and the problems of copyright
- promote the development and advancement of the profession and
- encourage membersip participation.

The basic mission of any library association is to develop products and services which offer practical solutions to the problems of this fast changing world; to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library services; to promote excellence through continuing education program, publications, communications and awards, and to undertake other such innovative program. The purpose is to develop, expand and enhance the professional

knowledge and status of the profession. One of the prime activities of professional associations is to create variety of venues for the discussion of issues.

International library associations- a review of literature
An examination on literature in the domain of professional library and information associations reveals that although potentially important as they exist precisely to provide members with information about latest developments in this area but have received relatively less attention. An effort is made to scan the literature published during last ten years on international library associations as well as few prominent and widely recognized national level associations viz. ALA, SLA, CILIP who have international component and promoting international librarianship through their program.The reviews presented here are not intended to be exhaustive bibliographies of everything related to International library associations. Rather it has mentioned the few significant resources; those would most repay the attention of the interested reader and provide relevant information to the professionals undertaking research in this area or interested to join for professional development.

Schmidmaier (1995*)* recalls some facts about the IATUL publications from 1955 to 1965, which he feels is very interesting development and provides details of reprints and publications and membership from 1955 to 1965 in two appendices.

In his essay Shaw, Dennis (1995) narrates about IATUL regional groups, inter library cooperation in Europe and his experiences in working with IFLA, UNESCO and ICSU. He further proposes to develop archives of IATUL publications as a permanent record for posterity which is the buzzword today.

Library trends - an American journal (over the years it has produced many issues of great value and interest) devoted an entire issue (1997 vol.46, no 2) to library associations. This special issue considered some of the important issues and challenges associated with library associations all over the world. In order to avoid losing membership, professional associations should demonstrate the benefits they can deliver.

Wilson (1997) emphasized the use of marketing strategies by professional associations and how proper adoption of marketing techniques can retain members and increase membership involvement within the association. He argued that cost effective marketing activities are possible for all kinds of professional associations but cautioned that there must be a will to devise, implement and monitor marketing in a cohesive, comprehensive and continuous manner. He further suggested that marketing campaign has to be integrated into the total developmental plan of the association. Library profession is facing a crisis and there is an urgent need to modernize the associations and make them more effective and caring about the professionals.

Kunaka (1998) examines the challenges faced by library association and suggested the people with whom the associations should communicate to enhance their efficiencies.

Strategic planning is considered to be a powerful tool for library associations that encourages more effective leadership and a sense of responsibility. The article by Parent (1998) provides the outline and the basic steps of strategic planning for associations and encouraged the use of strategic planning to increase the effectiveness of library associations and narrated experiences of the American Library Association's(ALA) long-range planning and successful implementation of programs.

Glasgow (2000) reviewed the context of the establishment of a library association in 1877 in Great Britain. He identified the factors influence the development of library associations in UK and the impact of LA on the early profession.

Gold et. al. (2002) assessed the responses of 400 professional associations in UK and recorded evidence of themes relating to the responses to the forces of change and the future. They organized the themes into three levels
- A broad high level pattern with long term orientation
- Patterns of activities which set out the implementation and details of strategies and plans
- Patterns of ongoing, customary activities.

In his feature article Hyams (2002) discussed about the fundamental differences between ALA and CILIP. He opined that ALA focuses on libraries and library issues and not individual information worker on the other hand CILIP cater for the stuff of non traditional library and information services and includes them among its membership. He made a special mention about Mitch Freedman's recommendation that CILIP should take the macro approach for defending and promoting the profession as a whole.

Simmonds (2003) describes the contribution of -the chartered Institute of Library and information professionals (CILIP) to the professional development of its members.

Nancy Fjallbrant (2003) presents a brief overview of IATUL and highlights its membership policies publications, and annual conferences.

Shimmon (2003) overviewed IFLA's mission, organizational structure, activities, regional offices, core programmes, mid term programmes, publications and how it is international in true sense.

Heather (2004) stated "Library associations can facilitate open access through an enlightened copy right policy…. Library associations that have already made their publications open access are reporting no change in membership or increased membership". She quoted examples that Medical Library Association has made open access to its premier, peer-reviewed Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA). For many library associations, journals have traditionally been published primarily for the benefit of members. Subscription and advertising revenue is not a factor.

Byrne et.al.(2006) report on IFLA's achievements, priori-ties, three elements viz. Society, Profession, Members, and commitment to societal issues demonstrated in the continuing work of FAIFE, WSIS advocacy, over the last four years through the Geneva phase to 2005 Summit meeting in Tunis.

Ghosh (2006) emphasizes the immediate need for restructuring the library associations and developing new working model which is financially stronger, should function in close partnership with other groups.

Smith and Harvey (2006) identify the role of the professional association in recognizing, enabling, promoting and fostering research culture amongst qualified professionals. They observed that in Australia, "..the role of research in the profession has not always been openly encouraged by its association….there is evidence that some associations are realizing that research and the research process need to be better recognized.

Open Access is another significant movement on the library landscape which is generating much passion and enthusiasm in the profession. Peter Suber, the proponent of Open Access movement, opined that Professional Associations can lead the open access movement. He identified several roles professional associations can play to further the movement.

Genesis, Growth and current status:
IATUL was founded in May 1955 as a voluntary international non-governmental organization of libraries and it works in close cooperation with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI) etc. It is an international body, which unites all librarians, Information Scientists and all those who are concerned with the activities in Science and Technological libraries throughout the world. In

September 1955 IATUL was recognized as a subsection of International Library Association's division of The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). It now works in association with the IFLA Section of Science and Technology Libraries.

In 1990 IATUL was formally affiliated with UNESCO. This affiliation operates now through IFLA. Since 1999, IATUL is also a member of ICSTI – the International Council for Scientific and Technical Information. IATUL General Assembly meeting takes place once in a year and the Board consists of one of President and immediate past president, Secretary, Treasures and two vice presidents and members. The board members are selected from different regions to cover a wide geographical area. Current IATUL board has President, Past president, Two vice presidents, Treasurer, secretary and five members.

In the year 1955 there were 34 libraries in 14 countries and by 1966 the number had already increased to 93 libraries in 30 countries (Schmidmaier,1995)
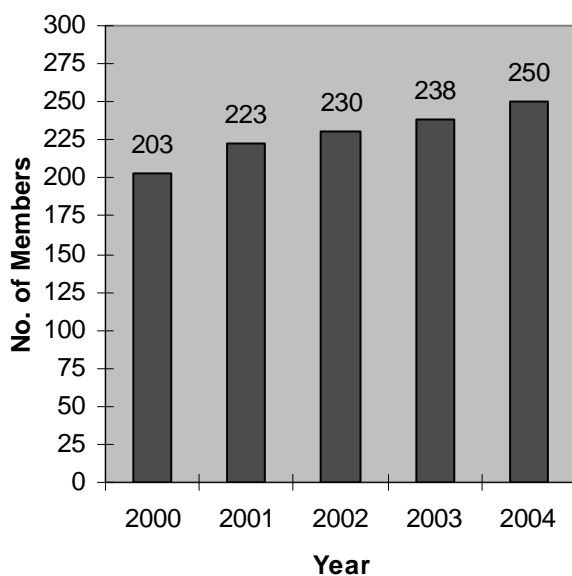
Chart 1: Growth of IATUL membership during 2000-2004

IATUL membership is institutional with a senior library manager nominated as contact for the institution. Membership is based on the calendar year. There are four categories of Membership:
  ➢ Ordinary membership
  ➢ Associate Membership
  ➢ Sustaining Membership
  ➢ Honorary Membership.

All the first three categories are institutional except Honorary which is for individuals who have served the Association, or international librarianship, with particular distinction.

There is a sharp increase in memberships as we see the records available on website. Eighteen members had joined during 2003-2004. Today the membership spreads around 50 countries. The main objective of IATUL is to provide a forum where library directors and senior managers can meet to exchange views on matters of current significance and to provide an opportunity for them to develop a collaborative approach to solving problems.

The student or new librarian who has a strong interest in international librarianship can't join IATUL as a personal member. Probably the personal member may not represent an organization and is, therefore, not accepted. However, truly global association like IFLA accepts individual membership. This side door allows a new librarian immediate and direct exposure to a wide range of international perspectives.

Contribution made by IATUL in the development of Science and Technology Librarianship:

As the global information age becomes a reality there is a widespread recognition about the role of library associations in educating and empowering professional communities, which holds that traditional bureaucratic hierarchical models of library associations are rightly criticized as too inflexible to deliver products and services Michel Pigeon, Rector of Université Laval in his inaugural address at 26th annual conference said "IATUL network is very important to us, by its

affiliation to UNESCO on the one hand, but also, on the other hand, because of the focus it puts on the progress of librarianship in the context of the accelerated progress of a worldwide knowledge society, based on the growing development of communication and information"

Mara (1995) stated "The influence of IATUL on the development of technical librarianship in Slovenia and in former Yugoslavia is incontestable and it is my opinion that our cooperation with IATUL was to a certain extent useful also for IATUL's members. These members came from countries with different political systems so, at that time, Yugoslavia as a co-founder of the non-aligned movement was an interesting case. Through papers presented at conferences and Board meetings, IATUL members were kept updated with the system of university technical libraries and information centers in Yugoslavia; they could follow the progress of students' education as users of scientific information; they heard about experience gained by the CTK (Centralna tehniska knjiznica Univerze v Ljubljani) consulting service as a basis for forming the library-information system of CTK in cooperation with faculty and special libraries in Slovenia; they learnt about dilemmas arising from making domestic databases; information on CTK's experience in supplying documents and scientific information to users from industry was presented, and IATUL members were acquainted with CTK's contribution to universal availability of serials".

IATUL provides members with:
1. A network of colleagues throughout the world;
2. IATUL Alert, a monthly email bulletin
3. Discount registration to the annual IATUL conference;
4. A copy of the conference proceedings on CD-ROM;
5. Access to IATUL Mailing List- the Association's discussion list.
1. IATUL News-a web page listing of news items relevant to members.

Quality publications of associations can have deep impact on professionals and considered an important tool to empower the professional communities. Elin Törnudd (1995) opined "IATUL Proceedings which has evolved through different forms, including five years as a journal, IATUL Quarterly from 1987 to 1991, is a treasury for retrospective studies. There are sources for comprehensive studies of the development of library management and technology as well as for biographical research". IATUL Proceedings has been very well covered by abstract and index services in the field of information provision, such as Library and information science abstract (LISA) and accessible through search engines viz. google scholar

As one of the benefits of membership, IATUL works with Eduserv, a UK not-for-profit company to provide preferential subscription rates to a range of online databases and software, including Reuters Business Insight Unlimited; Data monitor, Business Information Centre; Emerald Abstracts and Fulltext; ESDU Engineering Validated Data; Faculty of 1000; IEE Online; Inspec; and Knovel.

Annual Conferences
IATUL is the key international conference to attend in order to stay abreast of developments and trends in Science and Technological libraries around the world. The general aim of the IATUL annual conference is to provide members and other interested professionals the opportunity to discuss issues facing tertiary education libraries and highlight several important issues and challenges that Science and Technological libraries are facing worldwide.

Table 1:
IATUL conferences from 1995-2007- variety of themes and wide distribution of meeting places

YEAR	THEME	PLACE
1995	16th conference on Resource management	University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands
1996	17th Networks, Networking and Implications for digital libraries	University of California, USA
1997	18th Scholarly Communication in Focus	NTNU, Trondheim, Norway
1998	19th The Challenge to be relevant in the 21st Century	University of Pretoria, South Africa
1999	20th The future of libraries in human communication	Technical University of Crete, Greece
2000	21st Virtual libraries, Virtual Communities	Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia
2001	22nd Stratum continuum of information	Delft University of Technology Library, Delft, the Netherlands.
2002	23rd Partnerships ,consortia and 21st century library service	Jointly held by the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering and Technology, and the University of Missouri, Kansas City, USA
2003	24th libraries and education in the networked information environment	Middle Eastern Technical University, Edinburg , Scotland
2004	25th library management in changing environment	KraKow University of Technology, KraKow, Poland,
2005	26th Information and Innovation	University of Laval, Quebec city, Canada
2006	27th Embedding libraries in learning and research	University of Minho, Porto, Portugal
2007	28th Global access to science: Scientific publishing for the future http://www.lib.kth.se/IATUL/	Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden

IATUL operates an annual Travel Grant Program to assist first-time attendees at the IATUL Conference who are from outside of the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and EU countries. The purpose of the Travel Grants is to encourage participation by institutions that are currently not members of IATUL. Travel grantees are selected among the professionals whose library is qualified for getting membership in IATUL.

26th annual conference and 50 years of IATUL
This was the first time in IATUL's 50 year history that the conference met in Canada hosted at University of Laval, Quebec City. The conference program addressed major issues like Infrastructure, People and innovation initiatives in Science and Technological University Libraries Worldwide.
Table-2: The geographic representation of 2005 conference attendees

Sr. No.	Name of the Country	No. of attendees in 2005
1	Australia	9
2	Austria	1
3	Belgium	4
4	Canada	43
5	England	1
6	Estonia	1
7	Finland	3
8	Germany	1
9	Hungery	1
10	India	1
11	Iran	1
12	Ireland	1
13	Jamaica	1
14	Lithuania	1
15	New Zealand	3
16	Norway	1
17	Poland	2
18	Portugal	2
19	Slovakia	1
20	South Africa	2
21	Spain	2
22	Sewden	3
23	Switzerland	1
24	The Netherlands	1
25	United Kingdom	5
26	USA	19

The delegates and members stressed the importance of global collaboration and exchanged ideas and research experiences including crucial information needs of users in their institutions. Fortunately the author was one of the IATUL travel grantee for the year 2005 and it seemed that it's a conference always worth attending.

26th Annual conference hosted speakers from all over the world, with over 100 participants from 26 countries. There was a fairly equal amount of men and women, and the crowd was mostly middle-aged. Its informality and the fact that publishers, vendors, and Information Professionals are together in the same place, no exhibits, no high volume sales pitches, just talking about issues that concern all of us, and the value of the conference attracted the attention of senior managers, library Directors, Deans as well as young professionals responsible for information services and resources management.   Moreover, it was a good opportunity to listen to experts and practitioners from North America and discuss various issues and problems we are facing in Asia.

Michel Pigeon (2005), Rector of University of Laval in his inaugural address said "Information and Innovation", is an appropriate theme which will advance understanding about the relationship between the creation, the publication and the use of scientific information and the innovation agendas of governments, industry and universities worldwide. He further stated "It is the occasion to explore the relationship between the advancement of knowledge and the advancement of society, to see how it reinforces and strengthens the innovation capacity of communities at the local, regional and national levels". The parallel session allows interested attendees to concentrate on a certain theme or to attend sessions of interest in related topics.

A special exhibition of nearly hundred photographs of important IATUL events, majority are from the annual conferences, meetings, sight seeing memories etc. were organized during the 2005 conference as the mark of celebration of 50th anniversary.

The annual conferences have had world wide gatherings but at the same time, it is very clear that the countries and regions of the world are very uneqally respresented at the IATUL meetings. It is evident (from the table-2) that participants were mostly from America and European continent; only two and three participants were from Asia and Africa respectively represented IATUL 2005.Only New Zealand represented Asia Pacific region.

SWOT analysis:

SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis allows the identification of needs, potential problems and issues, and plays an important part in strategic planning. The strengths and weaknesses are within the service provided to the members -for example, their range of publications. On the other hand opportunities and threats come from outside the service- for example, funding or changes in the memberships. Before any progress can be made, information about the opportunities and threats facing the associations from outside must be discovered. Information in this regard can be obtained by checking the current trends in the profession and changing needs of members. IATUL's strategy must be prepared to meet challenges faced by members as well as, to fulfill the demands arise due to fast changing library landscape. The purpose of the SWOT is to identify (and pursue) opportunities that play to strengths, minimize weaknesses and take into account potential threats. However, it is very difficult to prove these value statements since many of these activities are relatively intangible. IATUL members face dramatic changes in this digital era as well as significant opportunities and must position themselves to thrive in the new environment.

Fig: 1 SWOT analysis-IATUL

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. The IATUL is the only international level representative of Technological University libraries. It provides library directors and senior managers an opportunity to develop a collaborative approach to solving common problems. 2. The IATUL Conference is a well known professional forum, where the most critical issues dealing with the development and strengthening of cooperation among Technological University libraries are discussed. Moreover it's a forum for dialog among high level information professionals serving in various institutions throughout the world and develop strategies for practical implementation. IATUL has been successful in providing such a forum during the last twenty-five years. 3. Roles and functions are clearly and formally recorded in its publicly available websites. 4. Strengths identified are membership-based, i.e. senior level involvement, vocational commitment and membership expertise. Another key strength is number of distributed alternative access points which means that members do not have to travel to get the services of the Association.	1. One of the major weaknesses of the IATUL is that it has not sufficiently responded to members' changing needs, assuming that its services remain wholly relevant. 2. Lack of local visibility and advocacy and lack of strategic networking with other groups. Non-representation of huge percentage of professionals - many non-members have never been approached to join up and are largely unaware of the organization. Proper networks need to be created. 3. Restrictive access to newsletters, current issues of are available only to the members. Emphasis mostly on formal activities i.e. mainly conferences; information published sometimes not rated highly by members. 5. IATUL is unable to motivate members. Lack of a pro-active approach to placements is a problem. 6 IATUL's literary contribution to the library profession is considered poor: publications are sadly lacking.

	7. Web site is not informative. There is no vision statement available.
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. IATUL should organize virtual conferences and workshops and must go for international cooperation and participate in international professional events. 2. Opportunities open to IATUL to assert the potentially central role of the profession in a changed environment variously referred to as the information age or the information society. 3. Developing an interactive personalized Portal and integrated service delivery to include web form, e-mail, phone and chat. The Web site should provide innovative ways of delivering services such as virtual tours or subject-specific tutorials that present information for a particular class of professionals. 4. There is a need for the IATUL to publish official journals in the pattern of IFLA journal with reflective articles.	1. The cooperation and understanding of members is not very high and shortage of funds is a real headache. Financial constraints and lack of permanent HQ are difficulties. 2. IATUL has limited networking capacity, particularly in key areas such as on-going professional development and this, in turn, limits what we refer to as its professional currency.

The IATUL is the only Technological University libraries Association at international level, and the author's observation and available data suggests that the IATUL has both weaknesses and strengths and the greater levels of opportunity than threat. The strength of any library association lies in its continuing ability to react flexibly to new challenges and create sufficient infrastructure to accommodate changes. The primary need is to provide an analysis of the contemporary situation on a continuous basis rather than as something that starts and then falls into neglect. IATUL is now facing some of its greatest threats and potentially most rewarding opportunities. A central theme in both these threats and opportunities is the changing profession and the need for professionals to reengineer themselves to meet the information-intensive demands.

The observation and recommendations:
Due to the changing nature of librarianship resulting from the increasing amount of information available in digital format, educating digital librarians has become an important agenda for Professional Library associations. The literature review reveals that library associations worldwide face numerous challenges as they attempt to address different concerns in a fast changing knowledge society. Today we are in a transitional era therefore it is difficult to understand fully the professional challenges confronted at various levels, and there is an urgent need to modernize professional associations to make them more effective and caring about professionals. Membership of associations is a prerequisite for professional growth and development. However, this source of revenue continues to decline as members resist dues increases and as membership numbers decline. When members do not consider themselves to be receiving value for money they exercise the option not to join or withdraw. In response, professional associations must identify and generate revenues

from sources other than membership fees. Often this comes from corporate sponsorship, advertising and other direct fund rising activities. In order to avoid losing membership, IATUL should demonstrate the benefits it can deliver.

From its modest beginning in 1927 as a kind of club of library associations and directors of major libraries in Europe and North America, IFLA has developed into a worldwide network of library associations, libraries, and librarians, exchanging information, developing guidelines to good practice and influencing the world's decision making bodies in the service of libraries and their users (Simmon, 2003). Today IFLA is considered as truly international federation of libraries with 1700 members from 150 countries. But IATUL is still predominantly European with handful of members representing from Asia and Africa. According to Shaw (1995) medium for communication between the IATUL Board and the membership at large is highly inadequate.

Today the library profession is facing a crisis and there is an urgent need to modernize the profession's associations and make them more effective and caring about the members. The need of the hour is the library as a place for learning, information and communication within the professional environment, creating networks and reaching out to the clientele as well other professionals. Packing and evaluating information as well education for information literacy will be of high priority to determine the success of the profession. Because it will be less important to deliver comprehensive information sources than selecting those which are relevant for the clientele in all formats and possibilities as an ongoing process is needed.

Open Access is another significant movement on the library landscape which is generating much passion and enthusiasm in the profession. Today library associations have to provide the leading role in discussions on open access archiving, user rights, freedom of expression, management of intellectual property and problems of copyright which will finally determine the success of the information profession. There is a need that International Library associations like IATUL should persuade and motivate its member organizations so that they agree to lend their support to open access and mandate open access self-archiving in their respective institute.

The following are the recommendations for IATUL to function more successfully:

- It is suggested that the IATUL needs to re-present itself as an open, pro-active, participative organization representing a progressive profession and need to work for greater levels of co-operation within the library profession.
- There is a need to build internal and external connections i.e. between sectors, grades, other professional bodies and educational providers, as with other international level associations; it is predominantly European in membership with very few Asian and African members included. Also, IATUL is required to add more international components.
- IATUL ordinary membership is open only to Institutions and libraries teaching Masters or doctorate level courses and there is no scope for individual librarians/ information managers to get a membership. Provision is to be made in this regard.
- There is a need to encourage more interactions among IATUL members and for greater involvement in the association's activities by members. The IATUL should be a member-led institution, one which encourages members to contribute to its development. Dissemination channels used for knowledge sharing at present are mostly formal and are geared towards getting members to maintain the status quo.
- In IATUL a substantial number of members gather only in annual conferences. To bring it up to par with other International associations, IATUL should offer a mid term program on the pattern of IFLA.

- IATUL should develop a realistic strategy that would see an increase in membership and expand and reinvent the associations in the context of pervasive convergence technologies, unifying them over a boundary-less, organic network with a uniform interface. Given the present state of ICT it is possible to contemplate new methods for discussion, exchange and participatory relationship aimed at supporting and developing links through conscious and controlled use of such technology.
- IATUL publications (which are housed in different places) other than conference proceedings are not available in the website, initiatives in this regard should be taken to make IATUL collections accessible through digital repositories.

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