

# Libraries and librarians: Making a difference in the knowledge age

## The 67th IFLA Conference

by Hannelore B. Rader

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Conference this year was held in Boston from August 17–25, 2001. More than 5,300 persons attended the meeting, 2,000 more than attended any previous IFLA conference. More than 1,300 American delegates attended the conference, thus making the United States the country with the most representatives. (It has been 15 years since the IFLA Conference was held in the United States.) This conference also had the biggest exhibition ever, the highest number of first-time attendants, and the highest number of countries represented (150).

The theme of the 67th IFLA Conference, "Libraries and Librarians: Making a Difference in the Knowledge Age," addressed a multitude of topics, such as advancing the leadership role of librarians in the knowledge age, lifelong learning across space and time, managing information and technology, information policies, and collaborative partnerships.

More than 160 conference papers—translated into one or more of the five IFLA languages (English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian)—were presented at 261 different meetings, sessions, and workshops.

The U.S. Organizing Committee worked with many donors to sponsor 91 fellows from various developing countries around the world,

particularly Africa and South America. IFLA and OCLC continued to sponsor five Early Career Development Fellowships for 2002 to support library and information science professionals who are in the early stages of their career development and from countries with developing economies.

### The IFLA Council meeting

The following activities occurred at the council meeting:

- A resolution related to Cuba was adopted emphasizing information sharing activities.
- ALA President John W. Berry unveiled the campaign for the world's libraries, @your library.
- The first IFLA/FAIFE (Freedom to Access of Information and Freedom of Expression) World Report on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom was launched during this conference. IFLA President Christine Deschamps stated, "Libraries have a crucial role to play. They are an essential tool for the achievement of democracy and social development. Libraries provide access to information, ideas, and work of imagination. They serve as gateways to knowledge. Libraries must reflect the plurality and diversity of society, opposing all forms of censorship without being influenced by any political, moral, or religious opinions."
- Publication of the new IFLA-UNESCO Guidelines by K. G. Saur, 2001 (IFLA Publication 9)

### About the author

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entitled *The Public Library Service: IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Development* was announced.

### **The Section of University Libraries and Other General Research Libraries**

The Section of University Libraries and Other General Research Libraries, which has the largest membership (430) within IFLA, sponsored a successful pre-conference on leadership in cooperation with Harvard Institutes for Higher Education and ACRL.

The section's open meeting program addressed partnerships. Four speakers from Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States gave presentations featuring university libraries and a diverse array of partnerships. Some of these papers are available on the IFLA Web site at <http://www.ifla.org>.

The section also sponsored meetings on marketing academic libraries, user education, and performance measurements. In addition, the section held a half-day workshop at Northeastern University on "Managing Partnerships." Hannelore Rader (University of Louisville), Ilene Rockman (California State University System), and Tom Wilding (University of Texas at Arlington) addressed the following:

- managing academic and research libraries partnerships;
- managing partnerships with other institutions; and
- managing partnership with university support units.

Fifty participants held a productive discussion session with the presenters. The papers will be published in 2002 in *Library Management*, published by MCB University Press in England.

The section also finalized its strategic plan for 2002–03, which features topics related to quality and evaluation in academic and research libraries, changing roles of librarians in academia, the crisis in scholarly communication and publishing, and global higher education development and trends.

In summary, the 67th IFLA Conference was most successful, and Boston offered numerous opportunities for our international participants to become acquainted with American history, culture, and life. Interaction with colleagues from around the world demonstrated repeatedly that librarians share similar concerns, issues, and challenges at the beginning of the 21st century. ■

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