

# Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge (A2K)

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## Introduction

Many individuals and representatives of organizations have stressed, to me, the importance bringing together a publication that records and explores the roles of information forums and workers, libraries and librarians in driving access to information. In an era such as this when there is an exponential growth of information, access is a critical issue. On numerous occasions at conferences and meetings the view has been expressed that at no other time in the history of information provision has there been such a dire need for libraries to drive access to knowledge and information. The exponential growth of information, fueled by the exploitation of media such as the web and social networking, demands that there be a mediator with the skills and capacity to extract trusted and authentic information. Such an intermediary also has to be able to deliver reliable and authoritative information to the information-seeking community as well as the new knowledge and information that has been created in recent times. It is this new knowledge and information helps to stimulate the growth and development of societies and the world.

Libraries and information forums function in a paradoxical environment. On the one hand there is globally an unprecedented growth of information; and, on the other, for many there is a dearth of information as a consequence of the many barriers that hinder access to information. IFLA and the library world are cognizant that unfettered access to information is an essential in facilitating political stability to the world, quickening the pace of recovery from the internationally experienced recession, eradicating poverty, decreasing disease and ensuring a green environment. At its core, access to information ensures a just society for all. As a consequence, the creation of the Presidential Theme for 2009-2011 took these and other issues into account so that whatever the final decision, the theme would not only be relevant to the personal goals of the President but also one which would assist libraries and librarians to contribute significantly to addressing world issues as well as capture one of the key activities of the profession and its members. The final choice of theme for my Presidency during 2009-2011 was – *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge*.

This introductory chapter provides reflections on some of the key issues that were examined during my term as IFLA President (2009-2011). They are anchored in my Presidential theme and address the critical role that information workers, librarians and their respective institutions play in driving access to knowledge and information. The chapter represents the thinking that guided the conceptualization of my theme as well as the key points that emerged during my tenure as President in relation to thoughts and comments shared by colleagues and others with whom I interacted during my term. Early opportunities to explore my theme – *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge* – with a wide cross-section of persons associated with our profession were at the President-elect's Brain Storming Sessions at IFLA 74 and 75 which were held in Quebec City and Milan in August 2008 and 2009 respectively. In addition to sharing issues explored at those meetings and other events, this introductory chapter presents further refinements, views and perceptions on the theme as they emerged during my tenure as leader of our august association. Also contributing to this paper are a selection of thoughts from my acceptance speech at the 75<sup>th</sup> IFLA Congress in Milan 2009, my opening speech in Gothenburg 2010 and other presentations/reflections on my theme made during my Presidency. Two critical concepts, namely, knowledge and access underpin any consideration of access to knowledge. Thus, it is important to explore these concepts and my thinking about them as these will help to provide a background against which the subsequent chapters in this book can be considered. It is fully acknowledged that there may be differing and alternative views on these concepts. The following is provided as a backdrop against which the other contributions to this book can be placed.

## Defining Knowledge

In exploring the concept of knowledge, Harris (1996) draws distinction between the concepts of data, information and knowledge. When accumulated and processed, data, the lowest form of information, becomes information. While information has substance and purpose on its own it does not have meaning. For information to acquire meaning and representation it has to be combined with context and lived experience. It is through the injection of the human factor into information that this body of data becomes knowledge. Access to information is therefore an imperative for the development and use of knowledge. Knowledge generation is essential to the process of development. Knowledge is functional at many levels: it can alleviate poverty and deprivation; it serves as a springboard for innovation and change; and, it is a catalyst for national development and personal achievements.

Libraries as primary gateways to information are therefore important vehicles for the acquisition of knowledge. As knowledge institutions, libraries pro-

vide spaces for information-sharing and learning for all ages, genders, ethnicities and socio-economic groups regardless of their information/knowledge needs. Further, libraries facilitate access to information thereby providing the means through which new knowledge is developed and made available to all.

Knowledge is foundational to all spheres of life. An interrogation of this concept reveals that knowledge is critical for the growth of society and that knowledge is produced when information is absorbed, processed and internalized by individuals. Libraries, as critical providers of information have an important role to play in the creation of new knowledge. They are vital institutions for the creation, development and sustainability of knowledge societies. Information is a key input into the creation and maturation of knowledge, therefore, a significant criterion for a growing and healthy society is access to information. The library, as a major source for/conduit to information, serves a wide spectrum of information-seekers. Libraries are not only vital but also central to the facilitation of knowledge generation.

The concepts of knowledge and information are so intertwined that they could and are used interchangeably. Complementing the concepts of *knowledge* and *information* is the concept of *access* in the process of information provision: libraries drive access to knowledge and information. All knowledge and information is inconsequential if there is no access. And, as indicated at numerous meetings, information is the one commodity that grows in value with use. Therefore, access to knowledge and information is critical in creating new knowledge and information as part of the quest to become more innovative and to find solutions to issues that hinder growth and development.

## Defining Access

Drake (1984) says that access to information is a complex concept:

“As the term is used in our profession, we usually mean making information available. In most instances, however, we do not make information available; we make books available and leave the user to find needed information in our stock of printed material.”

This definition has evolved as libraries are making more information available in electronic and other formats. Changes in formats collected have progressively reduced the volume of printed materials found in libraries and other information-providing institutions. This evolution however must remain grounded in the fundamental principle of access to information. In an era of information explosion, it is unwise not to identify and dismantle the barriers that hinder to access to information given that restrictive access is a violation of the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, recent

events in certain parts of the world demonstrate that while regimes may construct barriers to information and that these are “accepted” for some time by some, the youth will find creative ways of sharing information despite known negative repercussions.

The concept of freedom of access to information is perhaps most clearly outlined in Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to this, all human beings have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts in public (Hamilton and Pors 2003). The IFLA Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (IFLA/FAIFE 2002) website posits the view that the right of access to information and ideas is vital for all societies. FAIFE argues that if citizens of the world are to participate and make informed choices they must have unrestricted access to information and be able to generate knowledge. An informed and knowledgeable citizenry adds value to the prosperity and development of a society. This argument is corroborated by Hamilton and Pors (2003) who advance that:

“access to information allows citizens to participate in the democratic process and make informed choices that will lead to the development of society. If an individual’s freedom of access to information or freedom of expression is impeded, information flow suffers and democratic processes are set back.”

However, one must recognize that although there may be the will, access could be impeded by a range of factors. It has also been argued by Hamilton and Pors (2003) that libraries, in the main, make every attempt to provide access to the widest range of resources possible. This desire however may be inhibited by factors such as budget constraints, lack of technological capacity, selector bias and legislation imposed by government.

## Role of Libraries in Driving Access to Knowledge

Gothenburg provided me with an opportunity to reiterate what I said in Milan, *viz*:

“Without knowledge all effort is nought. Without sound, accurate and reliable knowledge the decisions and actions we and others take can have disastrous consequences for a very long time. Knowledge is the key to success” (Tise 2010).

Further, access to knowledge is critical for the equal growth of all communities, societies, cultures and nations. Libraries, as essential providers of infor-

mation have an important role to play in the creation of new knowledge. As a major source for information, libraries serve a wide spectrum of information seekers, who are not only critical but central to the facilitation of knowledge generation. Equal access to knowledge serves to ensure the stability of nations and the assurance of world peace.

Access to knowledge however is not dependent free. To paraphrase Prof. Jan Hoithues of Germany, Gutenberg's invention of print with moveable letters caused books and printed media to become the core of information and its transmission. This made the Western concepts of literacy and numeracy key attributes of power and empowerment. The ability to produce and preserve the printed word is therefore a key attribute of power and empowerment. The capacity to discern the veracity of the printed word has become a core skill. In current times the printed word can no longer be taken as the only literacy of note and/or merit. Literacy skills have transitioned from reading, writing and understanding a formal scripted code to being able to distinguish between bathroom-writing as against that found in some of the widely available electronic resources which provide reputable information. Unfortunately, in today's world, electronically-based information is often not free and consequently not universally available. In order to understand the diversity of information sources, librarians therefore have had to develop several literacies to survive in today's marketplace. The commodification of information is one of the key challenges that libraries face as they seek to provide access to knowledge.

The creation of and access to knowledge is increasingly becoming dependent on the existence of technology, its utilization and an ever-advancing thirst for new technological developments to make knowledge more widely available on an anytime, anywhere and just-in-time basis. This growing dependence on technology has led to an economic value being placed on knowledge. Access to knowledge, as a consequence, is increasingly associated with fees attached to database usage, the reproduction of images as well as royalties for the use of sound bites or complete musical works. Thus, the payment of fees for access to information is a growing trend. No one can question the right of publishers to recover costs, however demands for payment introduces another barrier to information which needs to be overcome so as to facilitate access to knowledge. While knowledge is in and of itself an extremely valuable commodity, there are those who view knowledge as being even more valuable than precious metals such as gold, diamonds and platinum. Knowledge has become quantifiable in terms of its economic worth. Knowledge is the only commodity that increases in value with use – there are no diminishing returns when knowledge is used. In fact the use of existing knowledge often leads to the creation of new knowledge thereby enhancing the inherent value of this commodity.

It is beyond debate that libraries and librarians play a critical role in providing access to knowledge. Not only are libraries critical conduits of informa-

tion and knowledge but by storing resources of knowledge they preserve knowledge. Further, as librarians enhance access opportunities, knowledge becomes more universally available. The growing use and incorporation of technology to access knowledge enables it to become more available to this and future generations. By playing a critical role in such developments, libraries and librarians become central to the creation and sustainability of the information society. By facilitating the spread information and making it more easily accessible, libraries and librarians are contributing to both societal and individual development.

The ubiquitous existence of digital products to provide access to information in many developed countries makes information much more readily available in many societies. Indeed, in those societies, there is an ever increasing dependence on technology to deliver and preserve knowledge and information. It would be safe to assume that with the widespread availability of technology in those societies, access to information would become a “non-issue”. However, there are certain realities that prevail in both developing and developed worlds. In the developed world while there are information-deprived communities, one of the deprivations being limited access to technology and its supporting infrastructure. The possibilities of such persons becoming connected are considerably more likely than for those who live in developing countries and/or emerging economies. I advance this position because in the developed world the technology already exists and the cost of hardware and software is considerably less than that which persons in developing countries are required to pay. The major requirement needed to connect such communities is proactive measures on the part of the relevant public and private entities.

In the developing world, the scenario is much more difficult to transcend as deprivation in a range of areas is endemic to such societies. In terms of accessing technologically-driven information, at best the technological infrastructure is weak and in many instances it is non-existent in many developing countries. Further, much of the software and hardware required for technologically-driven information are not products of developing world communities. In addition, the cost of hardware, software and other infrastructural supports is considerably higher in developing countries, a particular challenge for those countries for which access to hard currency/ies is problematic. Thus, the pre-occupation and assumption that a technological solution will be an immediate answer to hindrances to information has several inherent challenges. While it may seem paradoxical, one of the answers to increasing access to knowledge in developing countries is the use of ICTs. Mathur and Ambani (2005) are very convincing when they state:

“the application of ICT solutions for ... developing countries opens (sic) up a vast range of possibilities. Giving an opportunity to the majority of the inhabitants living in rural areas to cross the digital divide to ob-

tain access to information resources and services provided by ICT is the next revolution waiting to happen.”

As technology develops, it is reasonable to assume, that there will be advances which will enable developing countries to make quantum leaps in terms of technological generations so that there will be a technological platform which will enable persons and institutions in such locations to have the level of access at reasonable prices without requiring large investments in facilitating infrastructure.

Africa is noted for its poor landline telephone infrastructure. This challenge has been circumvented through the widespread use of cellular phone technology. On the other hand, India has circumvented its poor rural ICT infrastructure by developing “a technology specifically for the rural user at a low cost” (Mathur and Ambani 2005). Given these alternatives it is possible that knowledge and information could, through the installation of relevant technology, be made available to “deprived communities”. Unfortunately, the use of alternative technologies is not yet widespread throughout the developing world. If such technology were to be operationalized it would enable libraries to serve as a link between available information and the user communities at many levels. This strategy would also help to make libraries more embedded in their communities and their services more orientated to the needs of their users. Godlee et al. (2004) indicated however that it is important for the library to provide the right information at the right time thereby facilitating access to knowledge. This argument is corroborated by Feather (2006) who says that the problem is to select and evaluate information rather than to gain access and that the professionals bring their unique body of knowledge to the evaluation process.

Feather (2006), Mathur and Ambani (2005) and Godlee et al. (2004) opine that libraries are critically important in driving access to knowledge. Libraries must make every effort to dismantle all barriers that exist between users and the information and knowledge contained in their collections (in the broadest sense possible). Libraries must start opening their collections and services to all communities, especially to communities that have been and continue to be deprived of the world’s knowledge.

Lor and Britz (2007) assert that “modern ICTs have created many opportunities for civil society, opening up space for dialogue, participation and creativity.” Libraries have all of the above capacities and many others. In addition, they have a long history of developing networks to provide information to their clients. Libraries, with all that they have “accumulated over the centuries”, combined with ICTs offer a total knowledge package for the Information Society. One of the noted achievements of many libraries over the years is the creation of positive relationships with users. Nurturing and spreading such contacts

throughout the library world are steps that would redound to the benefits of libraries as they seek to provide access to knowledge to the peoples of the world.

The next section of this chapter deals with issues that were discussed at specific meetings, namely, the Presidential Brainstorming Sessions in Quebec City and Milan, my acceptance speech in Milan, an ILFA satellite conference in Gothenburg and my address at the general conference and annual general meeting in that city.

## Brainstorming Sessions: Quebec City and Milan

In Quebec City the following emerged as the key enablers/aspects for access to knowledge through/by libraries and librarians:

- **Libraries and librarians must become more user-oriented by:**
  - Bringing libraries and their resources to the users;
  - Empowering users through information literacy, social networking, etc.;
  - Enabling access to information (a paradigm shift from a custodial approach); and by
  - Facilitating the full participation of all citizens in societal activities.
- **Libraries and librarians must become active in advocacy by actively promoting libraries:**
  - Including the perspective of the users in their operations;
  - Communicating effectively with stakeholders on library/society matters;
  - Driving library policy/ies;
  - Facilitating and supporting open access for all;
  - Promoting a broader library agenda with key partners/stakeholders; and by
  - Becoming innovative information agents.
- **Libraries and librarians must create partnerships and foster opportunities for convergences with:**
  - Other societal stakeholders such as health workers, teachers, environmentalists, etc.;
  - Commercial/private enterprises; and
  - With other cultural/knowledge institutions.
- **In addition participants determined that library as space and place should foster:**
  - Information for ALL;

- Opportunities/gateways for social inclusion;
- “Wow” environments and experiences;
- Content in formats that appeal to young people and other discrete library user groups;
- Community knowledge space/s;
- Libraries as safe and trusted public spaces;
- Multicultural communities having their voices heard; and that they should serve as
- Gate-openers to information.

One of the comments made at the President-elect’s brainstorming session at the Milan conference which cannot be repeated too often, is that as professional librarians have been and are very good at talking to and among themselves. However, librarians have not been as successful in talking to and with others, particularly those who have the power to help them integrate and embed libraries in spaces of decision-making at the highest levels. While there are those who believe that libraries do not get votes and hence do not require support, if we, as information professionals, demonstrate that through libraries and librarians there can be quantitative and qualitative improvements in health issues, entrepreneurial skills development, environmental protection, poverty alleviation, a reduction in illiteracy, the development of a respect for diversity and all of the other issues that politicians and others in decision-making roles hold dear – that not only will librarians be providing access to knowledge, but they will also be able to demonstrate that libraries and librarians are key to the political process and national development.

The explorations of the theme and opinions expressed in both Quebec City and Milan helped to fashion the acceptance speech that I delivered in Milan in August 2009. These views were also further developed at the IFLA conference in Gothenburg and also in several speeches I made during my term as IFLA President. Next is a consideration of some of the key presentations and points made on my theme during the years 2009-2011.

## Acceptance Speech – Milan 2009

While my Presidential theme – *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge* – was created some time ago, its relevancy to today’s information age will continue long after I have left office. Further, it is a concept that is all embracing: it enables the profession to ensure that libraries remain at the heart of every thought, word and deed that occurs across, within and throughout our societies and communities; and, it can help anchor the work of the profession going forward. Without knowledge all effort is naught. Without sound, accurate and reliable knowledge, decisions and actions that we or others take can have dis-

astrous consequential effects for a very long time. Knowledge is the key to success. Knowledge and information professionals are committed to the belief that they have an obligation to ensure that they provide those who use their services with the knowledge and information that enables them to make the right decision, every time, all the time. Associated with this is the ethical responsibility that librarians must, on every occasion, provide equity in terms of access to information. Equity of access to information is one of IFLA's core values.

Access to information for all on equal terms is an unchallengeable human right. Equitable access for all pivots on the fundamental belief that all people are equal, all are free. An unalienable right of access to information and knowledge is the only way to ensure the development of all. Thus, there must be no short cuts, no settling for less in the provision of access to information.

One of the most important ways of achieving this human right, access to information, is for libraries and librarians to become fully engaged in their communities and societies. The activities and actions of the library and information services (LIS) sector are foundational to the existence of sustainable communities, economic growth and healthy societies. The result of our deeds, actions and services are vital to personal opportunities and well-being. The work of LIS professionals adds value to both individuals and society at large by providing citizens with access to knowledge and information. Not only must librarians passionately and powerfully advocate for the embedding of libraries and information services in all societies, but they must also seek opportunities which enable them to put libraries and library services at the forefront of all community and societal efforts. By this level of engagement librarians will be helping to make libraries drive access to knowledge. The role of the LIS sector in promoting democratic values and democratizing the search for knowledge cannot be underestimated. The role of librarians as information activists can and must be positive as this is the only way that they, as LIS professionals, can optimize the full potential of their profession and that for which it stands.

One of the things many librarians have not fully grasped is the strength that is inherent in their profession or the powerful impact that they can each have as an LIS professional. I am of the view that many librarians underestimate their potential and the value that they can and must contribute to their societies. We must turn this perception on its head!

While the theme of my Presidency refers to libraries, implicit and inherent in the phrase is the pivotal role that we as library and information professionals must and can play in making knowledge accessible to all. It is an imperative that librarians unreservedly have a commitment to and a concern for the public good which must encompass a respect for diversity and espouses the principle of equality and human rights for all. The members of IFLA are but a microcosm of the world's reality – a diversity which is in itself one of IFLA's

strengths. It would be remiss of me however not to acknowledge that embedded in this diversity are uneven opportunities to provide access to knowledge. Not all librarians practice in communities and societies where the latest technology is available at one's finger tips, where libraries are reasonably or abundantly resourced, or where reliable electrical and broad band services are given. Nevertheless, despite these constraints, it is still necessary to provide access to knowledge for all. Librarians practicing in such environments need support and assistance. Librarians should therefore work together and offer guidance and mentorship to professionals whose working realities are not privileged as others. It is through such acts that librarians will help to make the world a better place and also to realize one of the pillars of IFLA – Information for All – which is also an underlying concept of the theme *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge*. Further, the empowerment of our users is inextricably intertwined in *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge*. The creation and use of knowledge does not occur in a vacuum – people use knowledge for a variety of reasons – to learn, to grow, to make decisions and for recreational and entertainment purposes, in fact the list is limitless. The crucial role that libraries play in the empowerment of their users is that they (librarians) are the facilitating agencies to access the information they need. One of the ways in which libraries empower their users is that they, the users, are assured that they are accessing information with the knowledge that the information they receive is authentic and trustworthy. Libraries provide users with a considerable level of comfort, placing themselves in a strong position as a social service of the highest order.

There is another aspect of my theme to which needs interrogation namely, the role of libraries and librarians as creators of knowledge. While libraries have traditionally been spaces and places where one can access knowledge that is already available, it is only recently that librarians have begun to recognize their potential in the knowledge creation process. When a young entrepreneur visits a library as part of his or her investigation for the development of a new product, process or service, seldom is the critical role that the library and librarian played in the resultant end product acknowledged. However, without the information gleaned from the library visit or visits and often the extensive assistance of a librarian or two, the positive outcome of the entrepreneur's work could have been otherwise. But the knowledge creation process is not only with regard to the work of others. When librarians package and bundle existing information in such a way that an information-seeker is able to have at their fingertips exactly what they need to make a reasoned decision or further their research, the efforts of librarians are not confined to only providing access to knowledge and information, by their actions librarians have become knowledge creators. In such an instance not only are they driving access to knowledge, they are creators of knowledge and thus become part of the knowl-

edge-building process, one of the underpinnings of the knowledge society of which librarians are an integral dimension.

## Pre-Conference on Open Access (OA): Gothenburg 2010

Having subscribed to the concept of an Information Society, libraries have assumed the responsibility of opening access to knowledge and information via the open access (OA) movement. Libraries are at the coal face of the OA movement and they have been working feverishly to ensure the success of the movement. IFLA, representing libraries worldwide, has signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access. Further, IFLA is in the midst of developing a White Paper on OA.

At the pre-conference meeting in Gothenburg on OA, it was recognized that the warehouse of information role of the traditional library is rapidly being transformed into a facilitator of information. As such, the library serves as a hub for the conduits that link the vast repositories of information that are now available in digital format. Unfortunately, despite this exponential growth of trusted and relevant digital information, there is a scarcity of information for many as access to this information is protected by, what for some, are unaffordable subscription costs. Researchers spend an inordinate amount of time conducting and recording their research only to realize that key information is locked away behind prohibitive access fees. For researchers located in developing countries, this is especially a tragedy as they can ill-afford to pay these fees despite their desperate need for this researched information. Often such information is the gateway to solving the many of the problems that retard the development of their countries and societal advancement. That some of these barriers impact on access to indigenous knowledge is a particular tragedy for persons based in developing countries, given that much of this knowledge originates from such regions.

Lor (2007) advances reasons why the library is obliged to remove barriers that impede access to knowledge and information. He indicates that the rise of the OA movement results from the convergence of an economic crisis, a moral crisis, and an enabling technology. The economic problem is one of spiraling prices. The annual cancellation of journal subscriptions and drastic cut backs on monograph purchases are becoming the norm given economic realities. Only journal and monograph titles considered essential are acquired in order to support a basic service. With regard to developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in Lor's view, the situation is catastrophic as many large universities hold only a few hundred serial titles, many of which are received free of charge.

The second factor which is morally grounded has two dimensions. The first is an inability of researchers in developing countries to gain access to the world's scholarship especially in the sciences where cutting-edge information

is critical to one's work. The continued reference to the "digital divide" is not restricted to technology issues. It also has associated with a divide that exists between what scholars know and existing knowledge. This can be termed content or knowledge divide. The second aspect of this factor is a growing sense that the relationship between authors, journal publishers and users is out of balance and inequitable. There is a willingness by authors to submit their research free of charge and the willingness of editors and referees to peer-review the research also without the receipt of compensation. Scholars publish their research in peer-reviewed journals for professional gain, exposure and the sharing of knowledge. On the other hand, publishers receive considerable sums of money from journal subscriptions and the advertisements which appear in these publications. None of the profits are shared with contributors even though their work, to a large extent, has been the cause of a journal's standing within academia and other communities.

The third factor is the advent of the Internet. This digital technology is used both to control and to enhance access. Digital technology seems at first sight to offer untold opportunities for developing countries to catapult the digital divide and leapfrog technological generations in order to utilize technologies of the day. In reality however, the high cost of establishing a digital platform, continuous operating costs, ongoing access fees and a demand to keep abreast with technological advances place inordinate burdens on developing countries and deprived communities wishing to make use of digitally available information. The well espoused costs savings only occur after an institution has been able to provide the initial capital and recurrent outlay that technology demands. In addition, if services such as a stable electrical service and broad band connectivity are not available, national institutions seeking to use ICT as an access to knowledge solution are hampered due to the lack of the requisite infrastructural supports.

While these are realities, nevertheless IFLA is committed to OA as a solution to providing access to information. Below is a discussion on IFLA's position with regard to OA.

## IFLA's Commitment to OA

Given the potential of OA to drive access to knowledge, IFLA has drafted and signed the *IFLA Statement on Open Access to Scholarly Literature and Research Documentation*. This statement advances that IFLA is committed to ensuring the widest possible access to information for all people and acknowledges that the discovery, contention, elaboration and application of research in all fields will enhance progress, sustainability and human well-being. The clauses below are extracted from that statement:

IFLA acknowledges that the discovery, contention, elaboration and application of research in all fields will enhance progress, sustainability and human well being. Peer reviewed scholarly literature is a vital element in the processes of research and scholarship. It is supported by a range of research documentation, which includes pre-prints, technical reports and records of research data.

IFLA declares that the world-wide network of library and information services provides access to past, present and future scholarly literature and research documentation; ensures its preservation; assists users in discovery and use; and offers educational programs to enable users to develop lifelong literacies.

IFLA affirms that comprehensive open access to scholarly literature and research documentation is vital to the understanding of our world and to the identification of solutions to global challenges and particularly the reduction of information inequality. Open access guarantees the integrity of the system of scholarly communication by ensuring that all research and scholarship will be available in perpetuity for unrestricted examination and, where relevant, elaboration or refutation.

IFLA recognizes the important roles played by all involved in the recording and dissemination of research, including authors, editors, publishers, libraries and institutions, and advocates the adoption of the following open access principles in order to ensure the widest possible availability of scholarly literature and research documentation:

1. Acknowledgment and defense of the moral rights of authors, especially the rights of attribution and integrity.
2. Adoption of effective peer review processes to assure the quality of scholarly literature irrespective of mode of publication.
3. Resolute opposition to governmental, commercial or institutional censorship of the publications deriving from research and scholarship.
4. Succession to the public domain of all scholarly literature and research documentation at the expiration of the limited period of copyright protection provided by law, which period should be limited to a reasonable time, and the exercise of fair use provisions, unhindered by technological or other constraints, to ensure ready access by researchers and the general public during the period of protection.
5. Implementation of measures to overcome information inequality by enabling both publication of quality assured scholarly literature and

research documentation by researchers and scholars who may be dis-advantaged, and also ensuring effective and affordable access for the peoples of developing nations and all who experience disadvantage including the disabled.

6. Support for collaborative initiatives to develop sustainable open access publishing models and facilities including encouragement, such as the removal of contractual obstacles, for authors to make scholarly literature and research documentation available without charge.
7. Implementation of legal, contractual and technical mechanisms to ensure the preservation and perpetual availability, usability and authenticity of all scholarly literature and research documentation (IFLA 2004).

All of these developments, regardless of their source, point to a new and changed role for libraries and librarians. The next section explores some of the issues arising from these new paradigms and the impact they have made/will make on the profession and its professionals.

## Libraries as Publishers

Lor (2007) advances that an old tradition, a new technology and a new role have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the Internet. The new role is that of the libraries and librarians as publishers of scholarly information for the public good. Librarians and libraries operating in a new role as publisher remove the subscription barriers to literature. Assuming the role of publisher, libraries and librarians will help to accelerate research, enrich education and share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich. This role will help to expand the group of scholars who will have access to the information and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge (Lor 2007).

At the core of the OA movement is the distribution of scholarly information. Librarians are strongly advocating that authors publish their research material, for philanthropic reasons, in OA forums that allow for such knowledge to become accessible to those that cannot afford subscription fees.

Research conducted by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) revealed that several member libraries provide publishing services. There are 371 published peer-reviewed journals by large research libraries. Smaller libraries at institutions not affiliated with ARL have also undertaken publishing ventures. These libraries use a combination of publication tools such as Open

Journal System (OJS) and the Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress). Xia (2009) says that although there are currently no figures on exactly how many academic libraries have been involved in this publishing business, it is safe to say that the number is by no means small.

Discussions of library publishing have concentrated on the applicability, sustainability, and scalability of providing such services by libraries. Advocates and librarians are confident about the applicability. Research has found that scholars have a positive attitude towards cooperating with librarians and they (researchers) are willing to take the responsibility of organizing an editorial process for the quality control of publications. As has traditionally been the case for commercially published scholarly journals peer review is considered a necessary procedure for assessment of articles published in journals with a library/institutional imprint. An easy and guaranteed way for any library to manage a journal seems to be to transfer an existing publication from a commercial publishing operation to joint faculty-librarian management. Such transfers have been undertaken in a federally funded project in Canada. The library's responsibility is to provide hosting services; coordinate a supporting process; and, provide additional services such as permanent URLs, workflow streamlining, mark-up, file generation, and print on demand. While the scholar's role remains to provide high quality content that meets the demands of peer reviewed material.

Expanding on the Canadian experience, Xia (2009) goes on to state that the publishing systems adopted by the libraries with regard to academic journal publishing seem to satisfy all of their constituents. When comparing this form of publishing to lodging materials on institutional repositories, it would seem that the idea of library publishing academic content seems to have been more readily accepted by researchers than lodging with repositories. There is buy-in from those who have served as editors of journals published by traditional presses. From the faculty editors' point of view, the new model of scholarly communication is able to provide many more benefits than the traditional model of publishing: free access for readers (through libraries' Web sites), inexpensive hosting (even though libraries have to pay the hosting costs), and convenient management (through collaboration with other libraries). The ordinary scholar as reader is attracted to this model by its open-access component. It may also be that institutional administrators are pleased with library publishing because it increases the visibility of their institutions.

OA provides a new paradigm for libraries and librarians. It provides unprecedented opportunities for librarians to deliver rich content in the pursuance of a better informed world with access to essential knowledge and information for the generation of new knowledge to create a better world for all.

It is unfortunate that constraints of space do not allow me to share more of my experiences and engagements with you in terms of my Presidential Theme *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge*. To reiterate, at no time in the history

of information provision has there been a greater need for libraries. The glut of information that is available could have the opposite effect of creating knowledgeable and informed societies. Knowledge and information have the power of being either constructive or destructive. Misinformation is generally associated with destruction; while trusted and authentic information are critical pathways to creating and underpinning knowledgeable and informed societies that can be innovative in their quest for a better world. Libraries play a critical role in providing that trusted and authentic information – they make every endeavor to remove barriers to access to information to the extent that they are now becoming publishers to ensure access to knowledge and information.

## Contributions from Other Authors

While my Presidential Theme may only have the lifespan of my presidency it will live on – libraries cannot afford to doubt their role in driving access to knowledge. Testimony to this obligation is to be found in the chapters that follow that provide empirical research and substantiated argument by leaders in the profession. This book *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge* addresses *inter alia*, the issue of OA, providing access to indigenous content, opening access through information literacy, improving access to knowledge and information through the redefinition of library spaces.

This compilation of thought provoking contributions adds value to the Presidential Theme of *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge*. As indicated, libraries are the cornerstone for the growth and development of any nation. Historical knowledge, current knowledge and generation of future knowledge have deep planted roots in the library. The future is unimaginable without the critical link between the libraries and the generation of new knowledge and information.

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