



HKLA Newsletter

Hong Kong Library Association

HKLA Newsletter

No. 74, November 2006

Message from the President

The mission of the Hong Kong Library Association is to promote the excellence and leadership of the library and information managers, enhance delivery of high-quality service, offer opportunities for networking and professional growth, and advocate free and open access to information.

During my two years as President, great effort has been made to provide a range of services and activities to fulfill this mission.

Access to Information

The HKLA website (<http://www.hkla.org>) has been completely revamped with a new look and serves as a focal point for access to professional information, and the Hong Kong Libraries

Gateway provides convenient access to information on libraries in Hong Kong and links to libraries worldwide.

Support for Professional and Career Development

The Association has successfully organized a series of seminars, Education & Career Forums, workshops and conferences to support members' continuing professional development. Support is also offered to the HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education with awards being presented at the AGM to students of distinction in the programs sponsored by the HKLA to encourage and recognize academic excellence in library and information studies.

Networking Opportunities

Valuable networking activities have been provided through a range of innovative programs, including local and overseas library visits which usually drew overwhelming attendance. The AGM is also a grand occasion for members to share experiences with friends and

colleagues.

Worldwide Collaboration

The HKLA continues to maintain a close collaborative relationship with libraries in China, Taiwan and Macau, and other local and international organizations through conferences, exchanges and visits. It has been a committed member of the IFLA, participating in various functions, and, for the first time, the IFLA held its annual conference close to home in Korea in August this year.

As I close my Presidential term, reiterating my message in my AGM report, I would like to say a big thank you to our sterling team of Council members for their dedication and hard work during the past two years. Without their invaluable support, our goals could not have been achieved.

To all members, my deepest appreciation for your trust and encouragement and for giving me this opportunity to serve you as President. It has been a wonderful experience and I hope that it has also been a satisfying time for you.

Julia Chan,
President of the HKLA



Announcement

IF THERE IS ONLY ONE ANNOUNCEMENT YOU MUST READ, IT'S THIS!

The **48th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Hong Kong Library Association** will be held on 7 December 2006, Thursday, at 6:45 p.m. at Beijing Suites I – III, 3/F of the Marco Polo Prince Hotel, Harbor City, Canton Road, Tsimshatsui.

This year's Guest of Honor will be the honorable Margaret Ng (吳靄儀), member of the HKSAR Legislative Council. She will deliver a speech, to be followed by certificate and awards presentations. A buffet dinner will follow the meeting.

A full set of the AGM documents has been mailed to each member. If you have any questions, please contact the Honorary Secretary, Ms Annabelle Pau at 2241 5898 or annkppau@hkusua.hku.hk.



News from the Field

Dissertations & Theses Collection at HKBU Library

Hong Kong Baptist University Library has created an online union collection called Dissertations & Theses Collection (DTC). DTC provides a unique and user-friendly platform to search doctoral and master's students' dissertations and theses in any or all of seven Hong Kong university libraries simultaneously. The information is updated as the online union collection is indexed and maintained by the individual university libraries.

DTC is one of four union collections created as part of HKBU Library's Hong Kong Library Information Synergy (HKLIS) project. Other union collections are the Law Library Collections, Medical Library Collections, and Multimedia Collections.



Another key component of HKLIS is the Hong Kong Library Science Database (HKLS) to be launched in early December. The database will allow one-stop searching of Hong Kong librarians' writings on library science and others' publications on the themes of Hong Kong libraries and information services.

City Literature Online

To preserve and archive articles published in *City Literature* (城市文學) and its predecessor, *CityU Literature* (城大文學), the CityU Cultural and Sports Committee and the City University of Hong Kong Library have jointly developed City Literature Online (城市文學文庫). *City Literature* aims to foster literary creation and exchange among literature lovers in Hong Kong and Macau. It publishes winning entries of the City Literary Award, a writing competition hosted by the City University for students from all tertiary institutions in Hong Kong and Macau.

At present, City Literature Online includes the inaugural issue of *City Literature* and the 6th and the 7th issues of *CityU Literature*. The online archive can be found at <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/lib/digital/citylit/index.htm>.



Submissions Welcome!

Do you have any library news or announcements, travel reports, or commentary on librarianship issues that you would like to share with others? The HKLA newsletter is a great forum for sharing information and ideas, and it's an effective way to showcase your library's accomplishments.

Submissions are welcome year round.

Submission guidelines:

1. Submissions should not exceed two pages:
 - ◆ Those < 100 words should be included in the body of your email.
 - ◆ Those > 100 words should be sent as Word attachments.
2. Images should be saved in the highest possible resolution and largest possible size.
3. Your covering letter/email should give your full name, address, affiliation, and contact details.

Please send your submission to the editor via email at hkla@hkla.org



Now's the Time to Renew your Membership!

HKLA now has over 600 members! It's time to pledge your support to this unique community for the year 2007. Every member receives a personalized membership renewal form in December.

If you have any questions about membership, write to hkla@hkla.org or visit <http://www.hkla.org/membership.html> for more information.

A Review of the Change of the Role of Corporate Librarians Over the Past 10 Years

In the previous issues, we have focused on the evolution of academic libraries and academic librarians. Similar to the world of academic librarianship, corporate librarianship has experienced many changes in the last decade. In this issue we have a look at some of the forces behind these changes and how special librarians have coped with them.

✧ *Christabel Chung*, Head of Regional Library Services, Asia Pacific Equity Research, Citigroup Investment Research AND *Maggie Chan*, Librarian, Pinsent Masons

Introduction

Special libraries (in most cases referred to as 'corporate libraries') in Hong Kong have been undergoing tremendous change over the past 10 years. The factors underlying this change, namely, the economic and financial crises in the late 1990s, new business trends and technological progress, have threatened the survival of many special librarians and caused revolutionary changes in the job structure of special libraries.

Changes and Responses

1 Economic Changes

The development of special libraries in Hong Kong to a certain extent has been a reflection of the economy. The movements of the Hang Seng Index, a key indicator of economic, social and political phenomena in Hong Kong, are shown in Chart 1. The early to mid-1990s was a period of growth in the number of special libraries, a time when many multi-national corporations and big firms set up or expanded libraries in parallel with the economic upturn, in particular the rosier financial and property markets.

According to the survey we carried out in July 2006 on the Hong Kong special library sector (the 'Survey'), 24 out of 29 respondents' special libraries were set up during the 10 years previous, and 11 of them were set up about 10 years ago.

However, in line with the economic downturns following the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the 911 incident of 2001 and the outbreak of SARS in 2002, many corporate librarians, ourselves included, had to face at least one of the following: downsizing, cost cutting, reduction in services to the essentials, or loss of physical collections. Since our profession has been so tied to print and we have worked behind the scenes as supporting departments, when the economy worsens and the future is uncertain, libraries have been the first targets for cuts or downsizing. Are those who survive in the industry the fittest or the luckiest?

In order to survive, special librarians have become smarter in working within the business processes of their organizations. In difficult times, library staff sizes shrink as budget pressures mount. Library functions have reacted to this dynamic in a number of ways, including refining the definition of their priority service market; or

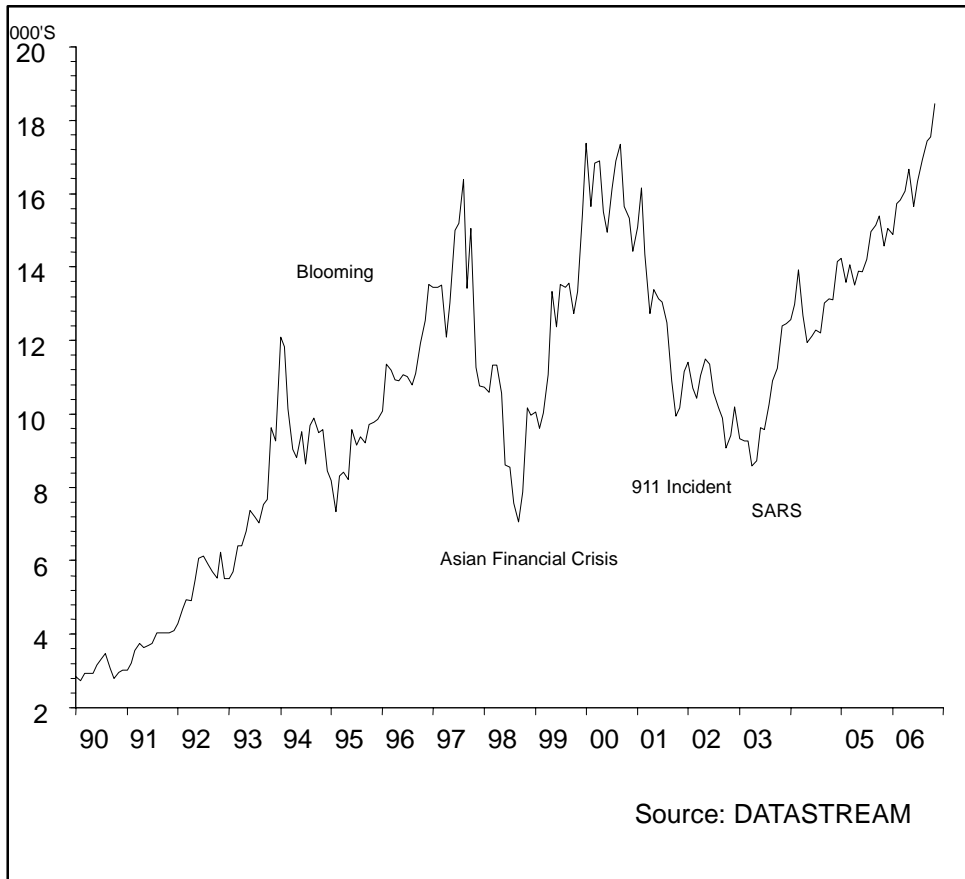


Chart 1: Economic trend in Hong Kong from 1990–YTD



changing their duties either to advocate the value of library services to the management – in the same way that most profit-making units of corporations advertise their worth – or to add value to the organization by providing analysis, consultative services, training and education, content management services, and metadata selection services.

All in all, special librarians have tried to reinvent themselves to stay relevant in their profession and did their best to maintain the integrity of service while facing increasing workloads in the workplace, the elimination of support staff, hiring freezes or even layoffs. Some actually did well to survive, and even thrive, though many, especially in libraries in the financial sector, saw their operations partly or totally shut down.

2 Technological Changes

Technology has been a major driving force behind change in many corporations, and library operations and working practices have undergone a shift from manual to automated systems and from print to electronic sources. In the early 1990s, when Internet access was not so common, print resources made up the bulk of most corporate library holdings. According to our experience, some well established corporate libraries created their own indices of useful articles by going through all issues of print journals. Just a few years later, as a result of rapid advances in technology, full-text electronic versions of some journals, covering more than the most recent 10 years, could be retrieved using fee-based CD-ROMs and online databases. This changed the traditional composition of library collections greatly. The Survey shows that for 66% of the

respondents' libraries, electronic information resources are the major library holdings (Table 1).

About 10 years ago, corporate librarians were still the gatekeepers of information because most research databases needed to be installed in a designated PC (usually a library PC) and search procedures were quite complicated. Now users can do their own searches, since technology allows portable passwords, search engines are more user-friendly and there are more free information resources on the Web. According to the Survey, special libraries are using more online databases and in-house automation systems with OPAC. Senior management has seen this as a good opportunity to cut costs by advocating paperless and virtual libraries. Some firms even started to cut library space. This has led to a loss of jobs, especially among library practitioners responsible for handling print materials, i.e. filing, printing, photocopying, etc.

The good news is that technology is opening up a world of employee participation in business decision-making and seamless and boundless interaction throughout the organization to bring about the exchange of best practices and good ideas company-wide, and to reinforce corporate culture. Some special librarians have focused on professional development and career-long learning to make themselves relevant and competitive. We are able to stay valuable in the marketplace by learning new skills or enhancing our current strengths. Special librarians have also switched their roles to more value-added services, such as



providing training for users and taking up more non-traditional duties or IT-related duties such as content management of the intranet and knowledge management coordination to allow the sharing of information and know-how among internal colleagues.

3 Corporate Business Strategies

From a management perspective, corporations always have to strive to retain a competitive edge. Knowledge management (KM) and the lowest-cost location are the two business models which have a great impact on special library functions and operations in recent years. Facing these changes, special librarians are using their current strengths to forge success for the future.

KM has become a popular business practice through the promotion of finding, selecting, organizing and disseminating information in a way that improves employees' comprehension in job-related areas so that businesses can react more quickly and be competitive. Many corporations now have KM teams. Corporate librarians, who have traditionally taken up the role of managing information resources, have used their expertise to participate in corporate KM initiatives. Results of the Survey confirm that many corporate libraries have taken up roles in their companies' KM initiatives, including

Table 1: Special Library Survey, July 2006 (by Christabel Chung)

Major library holdings	
Print	34%
Web	25%
Online databases	38%
CD-ROMs (DVDs, VCDs, etc.)	3%

Table 2: Special Library Survey, July 2006 (by Christabel Chung)

What is the title of your unit in the company?		
'Library...'	18	62%
'Info...' / 'KM...'	8	28%
Other titles	3	10%
Have there been any changes in the title in the past five years?		
Title changed	13	54%
Title not changed	11	46%

Intranet content development. Some have even changed their titles to reflect this (Table 2).

Since instant electronic transmission makes it possible to move information-search or data-dump jobs to any location around the globe, some special librarian positions are being given over to low-cost offshore centres in developing countries, such as Mainland China and India. Many librarians view outsourcing as a threat, but regardless of how we may feel, at some point the organization in which we work may decide to outsource part or all of its library operations. Special librarians have to face this fact in a positive manner and see this as an opportunity to improve their relationships with customers while staff of outsourcing/offshore sites can take over repetitive tasks, freeing up librarians' time for high-end projects. Librarians can also make use of their coordination and vendor management skills in managing offshore projects.

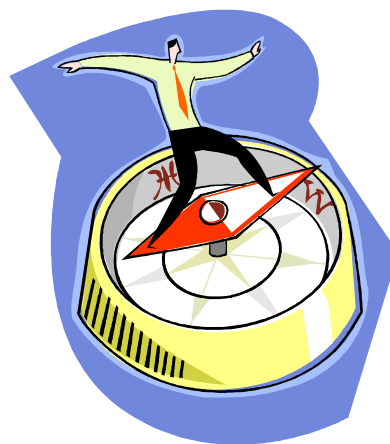
Conclusion

Most librarians have been forced to change since the latter part of the 1990s. Layoffs had to be implemented during periods of retrenchment, we had to trim down the size of physical libraries or even demolish them and eliminate most print materials to minimize the cost of occupancy; however, in the course of managing these changes, librarians developed a strategy to ensure the integrity of the services we provide and to fully justify library staff given the meager budget available. For example, we opted to cut clerical support staff and keep professional staff; we maintained research services instead of insisting on providing clerical support for photocopying, delivery or data downloading; we spent more on building up electronic resources instead of paying for floor space for print holdings. We understand that

only skilled librarians and quality information can guarantee top-notch information services.

To proactively address change, we special librarians have to alter our attitudes to accommodate change instead of resisting it, equipping ourselves by learning new IT and people-management skills. Apart from acquiring librarian skills, special librarians have to become or upgrade ourselves as subject specialists for the industry we serve. Most importantly, special librarians must always be aware of the goals of our companies and offer support to achieve these goals.

As professional librarians, we should be able to anticipate change in the environment, technology and business, as change is the only constant. Librarians can be valuable assets to the business units we support if we know how to stay relevant and add value.





At the end of every year, the HKLA newsletter publishes a special report by the recipient of the Heleni Linton Bursary of the previous year. Here is the report by **Teresa Sinn**, recipient of the 2005 Bursary.

Introduction

I still remember the first day I arrived at the library, a novice to librarianship. I knew nothing about library automation, library operations or customer services; all I knew was that 'Libraries collect a lot of books'. Time has flown by since then. Libraries have changed dramatically in recent years, so have users, and I have, too. I am grateful to have this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Hong Kong Library Association and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, for without their support and the opportunities they provided, I would not be fortunate enough to be the recipient of the Heleni Bursary 2005.

Since the beginning, my passion for serving library users and my wish to contribute to the profession and the community has grown continually stronger. However, in striving towards these goals, there has been a gap between my interest and my knowledge and capabilities. The words 'keep upgrading yourself' came to mean a great deal to me. During this past year, I gained so much. If I had to put it into words, I could say that it was like the most wonderful and unforgettable buffet of a lifetime!

University life

The pursuit of an MSc (LIM) not only enriched my knowledge in library science, it also provoked me to apply in new ways what I had learnt through previous experience as a library user as well as a service provider, generating new insights into librarianship. With changes in society and the influence of information technology, we have developed library digitalization projects, the Resource Description and Access (RDA) (AACR JSC 2006) project, and other initiatives. What will be the next wave in libraries? How will it affect future generations of library users? One thing I have learnt is that improvements in library services not only satisfy users' information needs, but also make them aware of their values, as Professor Turkle once said:

Technology catalyzes changes not only in what we do but also in how we think. It changes people's awareness of themselves, of one another, of their relationship with the world. (Turkle 1984, p. 13)

Frankly, the first few semesters were difficult to me. It wasn't only a time for absorbing new knowledge; we had to learn how to think in new ways, to query and find solutions. My previous studies through distance learning depended on time management skills and independent learning, but now I found myself in a completely different environment. I felt like I was falling behind in classes; in fact, I felt lost and unconfident.

It was at that time that I met a staff member whose advice was to focus, 'Focus on your job and your study.' I was sincerely grateful for his advice, and worked to gradually familiarize myself with the institution and get into the rhyme of the lectures. Group projects and further contact with professors were stimulating and gave me a deep appreciation for the importance of effective communication and organizational skills, the acceptance of individual differences, and, most importantly, the importance of teamwork. In addition, studying with foreign students was a new experience. Their ways of thinking and their creativity were impressive. All of what I learnt was relevant to, and in fact crucial, in the workplace. Time and again when I entered the office in the morning or reported for duty at the service desk, I could sense a change. I was understanding non-local users more easily and I was coming up with relevant questions about the librarian's practice. I am a beginner, a learner, starting again in a sense, learning how to learn, but it's already possible to taste some of the pleasures that will come with progress. In fact, there will always be many things for us to keep working on, like getting our mindset aligned with the library, the organization, the community and global trends in libraries; and upgrading ourselves, not just in our specific areas of responsibility in the workplace, but to become multi-skilled. There are always challenges ahead, but seeing users smile makes it worthwhile to take these challenges on.

Future plans

In the coming weeks, upon receipt of approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, a project I have been working on will progress to the research stage, which involves meeting the research subjects: students and their families. Data will be gathered and analyzed and the conceptual framework will be tested and developed. I have already learnt a lot in the process, from using software, to carrying out analysis during the literature review, defining research questions and assessing the ethical issues involved. In the future I hope to have the opportunity to study the influences of information and communication technology (ICT) on the workplace. No doubt, ICT improves the library services provided to users, but for staff, is ICT a facilitator of work or a threat? Are there areas for improvement?

I have truly treasure my time studying and learning from classmates from different sectors, including teacher-librarians working in primary schools, secondary schools, international schools, and special schools, and those working in academic libraries and commercial firms. Sharing work experiences broadens our view of librarianship and local library practices. I also feel lucky to have found voluntary work in a library, as this has given me a valuable opportunity to apply what I have learnt and gain a practical understanding of library operations. I hope that what I have gained will enable me to participate in more activities, be more open-minded, prepare for new trends and issues in librarianship, and develop a network with people through two-way sharing and mutual support.

I would like to thank the member of the professional staff who offered me his advice and support, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the recipient of the Heleni Bursary 2006. May you have a wonderful learning journey during the coming year.

References

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AACR JSC (19 June 2006) *Joint Steering Team for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules: RDA: Resource description and access*. Retrieved on November 1, 2006 from <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rda.html>.



Dr Colin Storey, Ms Teresa Sinn, Ms YC Leung (CUHK)

The Bills Committee on Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2006 is still considering the government proposals and it is expected that the Bill will be passed before this legislative year (2006/07). As of today, we are given to understand that the government, after considering all the submissions (including those from the education sector), has adopted the following position in the passage of the Bill:

- (a) The exemption of the education sector from the proposed criminal liability for making or distributing infringing copies of four types of printed works would remain unchanged.
- (b) The proposal about the circumvention of technological measures for copying infringement for the purpose of research and advancement of knowledge would remain unchanged.
- (c) Regarding copyright exemption, section 44(2) (i.e. the permitted act of recording under section 44 will not be available to users if there is a licensing scheme available) and 45(2) (i.e. the permitted act of reprographic copying to a reasonable extent under section 45 will not be a permitted act if there is a licensing scheme available) in the existing Ordinance will not be repealed due to strong objection from copyright owners.
- (d) The proposed fair dealing provision in the amended Ordinance would remain unchanged. To avoid ambiguity, a subsection will be added to expressly state that educational establishments may still rely on the fair dealing provision for copyright exemption despite a licensing scheme being available.
- (e) Regarding parallel importation, since copyright owners strongly object to the exemption of the education sector from civil and criminal liabilities for parallel importation of copyright works, the Joint University Libraries Advisory Committee (a committee comprising representatives of the libraries of the eight local UGC-funded institutions) would further discuss the issue, with a view to making another written representation to the Bills Committee explaining the needs of university libraries to engage overseas agents in sourcing books and multimedia items.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Mr P K Chiu, Chairman of the Concern Group of the Education Sector on Copyright Law, for this update.

People in the News

Appointment

Stacy B Gould began her post as University Archivist at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in July 2006. She is the first University Archivist employed by HKU and her job is to establish the University Archives. This involves setting up the physical space used to house the collections as they are acquired and creating and implementing the policies and procedures that will govern the work of the archivists in the future. A big part of this will be focusing on access to the collections in the University Archives and how best to serve their potential users amongst students, faculty, administration, and the public. The Archives is currently housed, in the Main Library, on the first floor directly across from Special Collections.

Stacy comes to HKU from the College of William and Mary in Virginia, where she worked for nine years, first as the Assistant University Archivist, then as Acting University Archivist, and then as the University Archivist. During these nine years she also served the campus of William and Mary and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science as the State Records Officer for Virginia. Before her time in Virginia, Stacy served as the University Records Archivist at Michigan State University for four and a half years.

She did her graduate work at Wright State University in Ohio and did a post graduate internship at Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina. Her interests, other than the archives profession, are reading, cooking, and animals of all kinds. She shares her home in Pokfulam with a kitty cat that she got from the SPCA in Wan Chai, whom she calls Billie Holiday.



Events

Visit to the Shenzhen Library

On 14 October the HKLA organized a tour to the Shenzhen Library which had just opened in July. Almost thirty librarians joined the tour, which offered the opportunity to see one of the most sophisticated public libraries in China and experience its modern architecture and interior design. The visit also provided members with the opportunity to meet with the library's management and get an insider's view of the state-of-the-art technologies developed in-house by its staff, particularly the RFID inventory systems, self-borrowing stations and self-return stations.



Ms Julia Chan and Mr Wang Da Ke (王大可),
Deputy Director of Shenzhen Library

Talk on the Customer-oriented Service and Collection Concept

About twenty librarians attended the talk on 3 November given by Dr Hannelore Vogt, Director of the Wurzburg City Library, Bavaria, Germany. Dr Vogt has given presentations and workshops worldwide on customer satisfaction and in this presentation she introduced the audience to the concepts of customer- and employee-oriented management. She also provided many examples from her library, which was chosen as Library of the Year three times by the German Library Association and Zeit Foundation.



EPILOGUE

We weren't sure whether to use the term 'epilogue', but thought it would attract more attention than 'note of thanks'.

Two years have flown by and this is the last issue of HKLA newsletter that the two of us will edit. Originally we thought we'd write a 2 – 3 page article on some interesting issue, such as why print may still be lovable or why Google's stock price should be higher/lower, but day dreaming is easier than writing – and it's hard to write when you are behind with your email, your in-tray is overflowing, and you had to close your voice mail account so that no one could leave you any more phone messages! So the article didn't materialize, but we'd like to take this opportunity to give our sincere thanks to the many contributors who found time, despite their busy schedules, to write the many interesting articles that have so enriched the HKLA newsletter. And thank you to our readers also for finding time to read, instead of something else, the HKLA newsletter. Thank you for your support.

Best wishes, the Editors

All about Conferences

World Library and Information Congress: 73rd IFLA General Conference and Council

The next IFLA conference will be held from 19 to 23 August 2007 in Durban, South Africa. The theme for the conference is 'Libraries for the Future: Progress, Development and Partnerships'.

The library and information sector serves different groups, from primary education, to research, to business and economic intelligence units. What relationship should there be between these different groups and how can partnership aid development?

To find out more about the event, go to <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla73/index.htm>. Sections that are calling for papers include:

* Reference and Information Services — Section theme: 'Getting and keeping ahead: educating for reference and information services for the future'

* Social Science Libraries — Section theme: 'Evidence based practice in social science libraries: Using research and empirical data to improve service'

* Information Literacy Section together with Academic and Research Libraries — Section theme: 'Conduits for transformation – incorporating multimodal instruction and learning into information literacy'

* Document Delivery and Resource Sharing — Section theme: 'Using technology to improve interlending and resource sharing services'

Proposals for papers are due in January and February 2007.

2007 IASL Conference, National Taiwan University

The 2007 International Association of School Librarianship will be organized by the Library Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and held at the GIS Convention Center at National Taiwan University in Taipei from 16 to 20 July 2007.

The theme for the 36th Annual Conference is 'Cyberspace, D-world, E-learning: Giving Libraries and Schools the Cutting Edge'. The Annual Conference will also incorporate the 11th International Forum on Research in School Librarianship.

More information is available at <http://www.iasl-slo.org/conference2007.html>.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 31 December 2006.



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