



## Information Technology Section – Annual report 2014

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The Information Technology Section undertakes activities that span many aspects of the work of IFLA. The section is therefore widely in collaboration with other Sections and with our Division.

The strategic plan for 2013-2015 was approved by the Section in Singapore in 2013. The activities of the section are supported by the Standing Committee members, representing organisations from around the world.

The engagement of the section with the Special Interest Group on the Semantic Web remains an important initiative of the IT Section.

### Work programme of the Section

The work programme of the section is supported by the members of the section, and key initiatives are reviewed annually in the conference meetings each year. The action programme for 2013/4 was agreed during the meetings in Singapore, and featured a continued focus on Semantic Web/Linked data, Open source and Open access. The action plan can be viewed at <http://www.ifla.org/node/8036>. The standing committee continued its round table discussion during the meeting to discern current issues facing Standing Committee members and guests. The following is a summary of key themes emerging from the meeting:

- Digital libraries and physical to digital transformation workflows
- Open access and open source. **The Asia and Oceania section is proposing a joint session in this area, as well as participation in the Satellite conference.**
- Information delivery in a mobile device context
- User experience testing and new catalogue interfaces
- Exemplary open source projects – **Suggested as one of the themes for the Satellite conference**
- Open source functions supporting harvesting, archiving and preservation. **This was suggested as a possible joint session topic with the Preservation and Conservation section**
- Big Data – this has been suggested as a possible new Special Interest Group supported by the Information Technology Section.
- Business models for open source sustainability. One of the possible themes of the satellite conference on Open Source
- Open source innovations. A further possible theme for the Satellite Conference
- Planning the curriculum and accreditation framework for the IT-aware librarian. **Suggested as a possible joint topic with the Education and Training or the**
- Information technology for poverty alleviation
- Linked data

### RFID

The convener of the Special Interest Group for RFID, Frank Seeliger, stepped down leaving the position vacant. After several successful years promoting the new standards for RFID, and lacking a new convener, the Section and PC decided to discontinue the SIG.

## **Digital Preservation**

The IT section has worked closely with the Preservation and Conservation section over the last 5 years, and once again this year this is expressed in a joint session at the Lyon conference on preservation of e-books. This topic of digital preservation and preservation workflows has been repeated theme of the section of the years. Significant issues remain unresolved in many aspects of digital preservation. Previous sessions have focussed on evolving preservation workflows, audits of resources. The section sees potential to continue joint sessions in this area to further develop digital preservation practice.

## **Open Source**

Open source continues to provide an important vehicle for adoption of new information technologies in libraries, both in developing countries and in developed countries where libraries are going through major technological transitions. The move to open access has been an important element in adoption of open source platforms supporting open access.

The planning of the proposed Satellite conference in Stellenbosch University Cape Town, on the theme “Open Source: transforming information access in libraries” is continuing. This satellite conference will have themes on best practice for open source project implementations, open source governments and business management, and innovations in open source. There is significant interest in publishing the results of the satellite in Cape Town, and we have contacted Oxford Scholarly Publishers regarding this.

## **Semantic Web and Linked Data**

The IT section and SIG held a further very successful satellite conference in Link Data. Linked data is replete with possibilities and is moving from innovation to practical implementation. During this session, as in Singapore, we heard some of the latest developments from leading practitioners in this area.

The IFLA IT Section has in the last 5 years especially focussed on semantic web, linked data, open access and open source as areas of technological development bearing great potential to transform information access. As you will see in the papers in this session we have picked these themes very well. The sessions illustrated how rich data islands are being woven together to create complex networked patterns of information. The Bibliothèque Nationale de France provided an excellent venue for the satellite conference and the SIG convenor, Emmanuel Bermès delivered an interesting event. Important themes on the satellite conference included effective versioning of ontologies used in open source, emerging hybrid approaches to bibliographic presentation through RDF and linked data and examples of large, effective implementations of linked data.

## **Cloud Computing**

A successful session on cloud computing with about 350 attendants opened the IT section programme at Lyon. The session papers illustrated the growing experience in this area and the developing practice in cloud services for libraries in major institutions such as Singapore National Library, and also how cloud-based services are slowly transforming library operations.

## **E-Books and preservation**

The second major event for the IT Section in conjunction with the Preservation and Conservation section was on the topic of e-books. As with the cloud computing session, this was well attended and covered the emerging practice in this difficult area of preservation.

## **Big Data**

Big Data is one of the key trends identified in the 2013 IFLA Trends report (<http://trends.ifla.org/literature-review/big-data>). The IFLA Information Technology Section proposes to establish a Special Interest Group focussed on this rapidly developing area. The section believes that there are diverse aspects of Big Data that need focussed attention by IFLA over the next 5 years at least, including:

- uses and benefits of Big Data
- public access to Big Data and eGovernment
- privacy
- rights to correct/update information
- retention periods of information

Our objective in formulating the SIG is to provide a focus point for developing ideas regarding Big Data as it affects libraries, as well as providing a platform within IFLA to assess and develop the avenues of response from IFLA to this rapidly developing area.

## **Access to the Law**

The IT Section has continued collaboration with the Parliamentary Libraries and FAIFE sections in collaboration on a session “Access to the Law”. Over the last 5 years the IT section has participated in a range of workshops and training sessions with the Parliamentary Libraries section.

## **User Interface Challenges and Multimedia**

A programme on the UI challenges with multimedia and mobile devices has been developed with the Multimedia section. This resonates well with the issues raised by section members.

## **Future directions**

Appropriate to the forward looking nature of the innovations that this section is engaged in, the section has collaborated with Division 3 in forming a session looking forward at key issues raised in the IFLA trend report.