



## General Comments:

I attended the annual [International Federation of Library Associations' conference](#) in Milan, Italy August 21-28. I am one of two representatives from ARCL's STS Section to the IFLA Section on Science and Technology Libraries. I serve on the Section's Standing Committee. That's officially why I attend IFLA. Unofficially, I am curious about international perspectives on librarianship and what I can learn from my colleagues across the globe. Often, my perspective is narrowed to Newport and Oregon State University. Attending IFLA reminds me that OSU Libraries do very interesting things and that many others in the world also do interesting things. I appreciate the support I get from the OSU Libraries and the OSU's Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station.

This is my third IFLA conference and had a very European bent. The theme and location dictate much of the feel of the conference. From the opening session, this one was quite Italian with a combination of speeches, theatre and history meshed into a three hour parade of people and images. Milan is hot and fairly deserted in August making it quite approachable if you move slowly, and the conference welcomed by the local community (including a special concert at La Scala and a lovely evening around the main piazza). The theme examined cultural heritage so Europe was a natural setting with its rich history of libraries, museums and archives. I found several programs describing fascinating collaborations between libraries and museums as people virtually repatriated objects, manuscripts and books. It is quite amazing to realize that a public library may have a 16th Century manuscript in its collection.



Yet, the European focus and concentration on cultural heritage seemed to limit the number of programs with substantial new ideas and approaches. Perhaps the field has hit a plateau with incorporating technology and now is working to implement it across functions. Presentations focused more on "who I am" and "what we do" rather than "why we do it" and "what we could do." Generally there was more description of large or complex digitization projects, and less on services to users. Evaluation of services is becoming more evident (the Statistics & Evaluation Section sponsored an interesting session on measuring use including one paper from the Netherlands describing a

nationwide survey of digitization activities.) While speakers rarely mentioned failure, the questions sometimes reveal it. There was an interesting question and answer around the value of national portals to digital information versus individual institutional portals. Most thought it was too soon to judge.

All in all, I focused much of time on figuring out how IFLA works as I was elected chair of the [Science and Technologies Libraries Section](#). The hierarchy is a bit daunting and I now have to become fluent in IFLA governance.

### **Interesting terms that I heard mentioned:**

- \* Library space zoning
- \* Cultural diplomacy
- \* Virtual reunification

Interesting concepts:

#### **1) Digital Library**

- a) National survey of digitization activities (mentioned above)
- b) Value of national portals
- c) What contemporary digital material will become 'heritage'?

#### **2) Copyright**

- a) Copyright at the national and international level (Work with WIPO helps nation's build better copyright environments)
- b) Discordant copyright in the EU
- c) Will copyright disappear?

#### **3) Open Access & Scholarly Communication**

- a) Interactive peer review (The STL Section had a fabulous program on open access and Dr. Poschl from the Max Planck Institute described the European Geophysical Union's peer review process.)
- b) Best practices in scholarly communication in China
- c) Separate discussion of Open Access publishing from IR archiving. It confuses people.
- d) Arabic scientific communication flows from the Arab world to the North rather than among Arabic countries.

4) **User initiated video** (I saw this at the Leonardo Da Vinci Museum where visitors can make YouTube videos among the displays and talk about what they are learning or think others may want to look at.)

#### **5) Knowledge management**

- a) What is it?

6) **Addressing today's college students, are they really as self-absorbed as some librarians describe?**

### **Observations from Selected Sessions:**

The session Academic and Research Hot Topics seemed a little lukewarm. One comment by Jim Neal on scholarly communication urged us to consider models of 'radical collaboration.' Comments on Fundraising and PR seemed to restate the known -

manage the flow of information and build long term relationship. Saarti on Library Spaces mentioned creating meeting places and hiding places within the library and several throughout the conference brought the need for the WOW factor in new library spaces.

A new special interest group on Environmental Sustainability presented its first program. It intends focus on libraries as consumers of energy as well as libraries involved with facilitating the sustainability discussion.

Statistics and Evaluation session on measuring use had two very interesting papers. The first, mentioned about, was on the [Netherlands survey](#). The second was from the Biblioteque Nationale de France on its collection development of [contemporary digital information and the metrics used to make decisions](#). It combines librarian expertise and computer metrics in a fascinating manner.



STL's session on open access had four strong papers. Ulrich Poschl was an excellent proponent for the innovative [collaborative peer process](#) used by the EGU and its journal, Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics Discussion.

Zhang Xiaolin described refining [OA responsibilities and strategies at the Chinese Academy of Science](#), an organization comprised of over 100 research institutes. 25,000 researchers and over 30,000 graduate students.



Iryna Kuchma from the non-profit organization Electronic Information for Libraries discussed what was happening with [open access policies throughout the developing world](#). For examples, South Africa is very active with a strong mandate from the University of Pretoria and the Academy of Science of South Africa adopting an OA business model for its journal. Eastern





European institutions are also rapidly embracing OA policies. Finally, Wahid Gdoura from Tunisia presented his exploration of [open access in Arab universities](#).

### Notes from the STL Section Standing Committee:

Every two years, the officers changes. So, I am the new chair replacing Jill Mayer, UNC Chapel Hill. Jim Anderson, the University of South Florida, is the new secretary replacing Deva Reddy, Texas A&M. Maxine Schmidt, University of Massachusetts - Amherst, agreed to take on the new task of web manager. We had a lively discussion about emerging topics that we should address at the 2010 conference settling on something on measuring the impact of open science. Projects that we will explore include delicious tags on good resources in science and technology librarianship. OA best practices, possible Face book promotion and children's science literature. We may hold a satellite workshop in Greece prior to the [2010 Conference](#) with a focus on open access and promote it to colleagues in eastern Europe who may not be able to attend the IFLA conference.

Irma Pasanen, Helsinki University of Technology, organized a great field trip to the [Leonardo Da Vinci Museum of Science and Technology](#). The curators and librarian



gave us a wonderful tour of the models of Da Vinci's drawings to the submarine to the library. Irma (right) talked with the Museum's Director of Programming.

**Janet Webster**

