WORKSHOP ON THE IFLA INTERNET MANIFESTO

Final Report

São Paulo, SP, Brazil - March 29, 2008

Hosting Institution: Biblioteca Latino-americana "Victor Civita", Memorial da América Latina

Promotion: Brazilian Federation of Library Associations, Information Scientists and Institutions - FEBAB and Memorial da América Latina

Institutional Support: IFLA/LAC, IFLA/FAIFE, IFLA/ALP

Considering the world scenario where digital inclusion and policies development are factors that need urgent actions, such as organization and access to information, undoubtedly these are two of the main challenges for countries and institutions that use the Internet. So, with the support of the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA) and the *Brazilian Federation of Library Associations, Information Scientists and Institutions* (FEBAB), the "**Workshop on the IFLA Internet Manifesto**" was held in March 29, 2008, at the Biblioteca Latino-americana "Victor Civita" Auditorium, Memorial da América Latina, in São Paulo, Brazil. Its aim was to provide a proper ambience for the analysis of the IFLA Internet Manifesto, a document which contains several principles that should be used as a guide to

build information access policies in this environment as well as to socialize experiences from different countries.

Workshop Development

The first lecture was presented by Prof. Dr. Filiberto Felipe Martinez Arellano, Coordinator of the IFLA Latin American and the Caribbean Section (IFLA/LAC) Standing Committee, about "**Internet Manifesto in the International Context**". He highlighted the connection of this document with Art. 19 from the "United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Also, he emphasized the importance of IFLA Guidelines to the community in order to help librarians safeguarding freedom of access to information on the Internet. In addition, he pointed out the main principles that should be taken into consideration in this process: public access, libraries and other information centers as points of access between people and information, contents, e-governments and democracy, besides the need of adopting more friendly software. He mentioned the barriers that should be removed in order to enable free access to information for all citizens and also the matters concerning users' training and policies establishment. These are actions recommended by IFLA and they aim to stimulate communities and national governments to support the use of information on the Internet in the libraries.

The second lecture was presented by Prof. Antonio Carlos Gonçalves de Oliveira, Programs Manager, from the Public Administration Secretary, State of São Paulo Government, representing the Secretary

Dr. Sidney Beraldo. It was about "**Programa Acessa São Paulo**" (São Paulo Access Program), for digital inclusion. He stated that this policy meets the major part of Internet Manifesto contents, and pointed out the aims of the Program, mainly concerning the guarantee of democratic and free access to information and communication technologies. Also, he commented on further aspects of the Program and its networks, as a result of partnerships with some mayors' offices or with the State of São Paulo Government itself. The lowest local Indexes of Human Development (IDH) were chosen for the definition of access points in the State of São Paulo, and one third of the access points were established in public libraries - some strategies are under way to enlarge this range. The Program provides appropriate technological infra-structure, including instructors to train users for the responsible use of this tool. A following-up system and evaluation procedures have been adopted in order to carry out continuous adjustments as needed. Some experiences have been included in a video presentation, entitled "Working Women".

The third lecture was about "**Library and the Internet in Brazil: scenarios and trends**", by Prof. Regina Célia Baptista Belluzzo. She presented some reflections about contemporary society, its main characteristics, the informal economy, and highlighted the libraries as agents in information area. There are some multicultural contexts in this environment and reality is fragmented into its political, economic and cultural conditions. Also, she reported on some situations related to Brazil and the Internet, pointing out the individual access, places

where this access is carried out and the main reasons for not having access to Internet yet in some regions. In Brazil, the initiatives concerning Internet use were commented on, emphasizing the role of libraries as a great challenge in the national context. Especially, the need to meet the important points proposed by Ms. Claudia Lux, President of the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* – IFLA, concerning "Libraries in the Agenda" was highlighted. Other aspects were also mentioned, involving the Brazilian scenario, reassuring the importance of libraries. In this matter, only the infrastructure of networks and its technical handling will not be enough to accomplish citizenship, learning throughout lifetime, innovation and social development. As main tendencies in this area, some were in relief, such as the development of new methodological proposals, the assemblage of holdings on multiple cultural contents and the adoption of strategies, policies and support plans to the free circulation of information. The final recommendation was directed to the need of having a project of wide social and political rebuilding in which all society segments are involved and are able to decide about the main path to be followed. This can be considered in order to lead to a solution for the social validity of Internet Manifesto in Brazil.

Next, Ms. Barbara Jones, Secretary of the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions / Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom or Expression* (IFLA/FAIFE), presented a brief contribution about "**The current role of Internet in Libraries**", pointing out the role of librarians in this scenario. According to article

19 from the "United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and the Internet Manifesto, they should do whatever they can in order to promote the open and free information flow in their communities. She pointed out that Internet can accelerate the national development and also can help reducing the digital divide, depending how this is put into practice. Also, she mentioned factors involving barriers to the Internet access and presented some examples and experiences of libraries and librarians concerning them, specially those related to corruption, transparency, users' knowledge about this matter, among others. She recommended that other seminars can be developed for debating on this matter and on the role of information professionals in this context.

Prof. Martha Castro, from Universidad Veracruzana de Mexico, was the next lecturer and reported about the access to information and its use in Latin America, pointing out the quality of social justice and sustainable development. She mentioned Art. 26 from the "United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights", and commented on the following items: development of human personality and enhancement of respect to the human rights; freedom of expression and association; freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion, of opinion, of expression, and of meeting. Another point emphasized was access to knowledge, that includes freedom of information, and information is fundamentally used for decision-making. She presented some detailed experiences carried out in different countries, involving persons with visual impairment as well as women in the digital

inclusion process, contributing as a result to reduce gender discrimination and promoting access to information in rural areas. Prof. Castro highlighted the importance of public policies in the Government agendas.

As a final participation, Ms. Barbara Jones talked about "**Implementing the Internet Manifesto in the Region**", and reported on the importance of the Manifesto to build formal policies on the Internet use and to help providing better use of library services. She also pointed out the importance of library professionals to keep continuously aware of the programs under development by the library associations in their countries.

Final Considerations

We congratulate the participants, lecturers and organizers of this Workshop who have enabled an ambience of reflection and discussion on the subjects of Internet, Libraries, and Librarians as well as on the access to information and its use in a smart way for the building of knowledge in the contemporary society. We expect that the 105 participants of this historical moment can multiply these actions in their consciences and communities.

São Paulo, March 29, 2008

Profa. Glória Georges Feres

Workshop Reporter