



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE BIBLIOTHECAIRES ET DES BIBLIOTHEQUES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER BIBLIOTHEKARISCHEN VEREINE UND INSTITUTIONEN
FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE BIBLIOTECARIOS Y BIBLIOTECAS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ БИБЛИОТЕЧНЫХ АССОЦИАЦИЙ И УЧРЕЖДЕНИЙ

CALL FOR PAPERS

IFLA Expert Meeting, 4th-5th of March 2013, Mexico City

Context/background:

In December, I wrote to you on behalf of Ingrid Parent, President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to confirm your attendance at the IFLA Expert Meeting on the 4th-5th of March 2013 in Mexico City.

As you will be aware, the purpose of the expert meeting is to examine the key emerging trends and themes in contemporary society which affect the information environment. The outputs from these discussions will form a key component of the IFLA Trend Report which will be launched at the World Library and Information Congress in August 2013.

Foundations for the expert meeting in Mexico

The roundtable discussion in Mexico will be based on two distinct elements:

- i) A literature review of existing studies and publications on future trends
- ii) Short papers (no more than 2-3 pages) submitted by each expert participating in the meeting in Mexico identifying the key trends relevant to their respective areas of expertise. The papers will be part of the IFLA Trend Report and a specific IFLA web platform.

The request:

To this end, we ask that your completed short paper be submitted no later than Friday 15th of February 2013 via email to dan.mount@civicagenda.eu

In order to help you focus on this task, the next section will set out some of the draft categories/trends which have emerged from our on-going literature review, along with some guiding questions for each category. We have included the full list of these questions to provide context as to the range of different areas we are looking at – but in terms of producing your paper we invite you to focus on five specific questions which we believe are relevant to your area of expertise. You may choose to answer these directly or use them for inspiration as you see fit.



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Summary of key themes/trends emerging from the literature review

The literature review will address existing research and published studies to examine emerging trends in contemporary society affecting the information environment. A summary of currently identified categories/trends and guiding questions can be found below.

Note: The completed literature review and a repository of supporting documents and links will be posted online on Monday 28th of January, on a specific Trend Report platform at which time you will be sent details of how access them.

CATEGORY 1: Cross-cutting Political and Regulatory trends

- Migration towards new intellectual property, copyright and patent regimes which accommodate technological innovation and new social patterns of consumption whilst supporting creativity and economic sustainability in both the developed and developing world.
- Greater transparency, access to public sector data and a growing momentum behind open government initiatives designed to empower citizens, reduce corruption and strengthen governance through new technologies.
- An increased appetite and capacity for certain governments to monitor their citizens' activities and control/limit the information they can access, assisted by progressively sophisticated approaches including the bulk monitoring of communications data across multiple platforms.
- The challenges of regulating a global borderless Internet at a supranational level whilst accommodating overlapping and competing national legal jurisdictions and frameworks will continue.

Q1: What will be the likely characteristics of future intellectual property/copyright regimes?

Q2: Will these regimes be led by market driven liberalisation or technology driven enforcement?

Q3: How will these regimes cope with the needs of developed and developing economies?

Q4: How will intellectual property rights interact with patent regimes?

Q5: How will tendencies towards a) greater transparency and open government; and b) political censorship, control and surveillance be likely to interact/develop over the next decade? How do we strike an appropriate balance between freedom and security?



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CATEGORY 2: Social Trends

- Behavioural advertising and personalised search optimisation contribute to the creation of balkanised “echo chamber communities” insulated from unfamiliar or alternative cultures and perspectives.
- The size of the digital universe will continue to expand exponentially with information and content shaped by a kaleidoscope of social, political, corporate (and on occasion extremist) agendas.
- Technology which makes access to information easier and cheaper while facilitating communication and collective action will support both positive outcomes (empowering individuals, increasing civic participation and corporate accountability) and negative outcomes (empowering cyber criminals and terrorist/extremist networks).
- Populations in the developed world will continue to age, while the developing world grows younger leading to differing usage patterns and competing demands on the information environment. Hyperconnectivity expands the influence and role of migrants and diasporas.
- Rising impact of online education resources (including open access to scholarly research and massive open online courses) combined with the emergence of new media and information literacy skills offer flexible non-formal and informal skill accumulation pathways.

Q1: Will the Internet foster further social balkanisation and division?

Q2: What role will information literacy skills play in enabling us to effectively manage, digest and correctly interpret content within a rapidly expanding digital universe?

Q3: How can we capitalise on the positive benefits of increased (technology assisted) access to information and enhanced possibilities for collective mobilisation while mitigating the risks?

Q4: What will be the net effect of competing demographic trends across the developed and developing world on the information environment?

Q5: How can we best leverage online education resources, new learning technologies (including mobile learning platforms) and non-formal/informal learning pathways to meet the widening skills gap in both the developed and developing world? How can we address the knowledge gap between students (digital natives) and teachers?

CATEGORY 3: Economic Trends

- The global middle class will grow to exceed 1 billion over the next decade (with the majority of this growth in Asia) creating a new generation with access to information, content and services.
- As economic incentives put increasing pressure on developing world governments to connect the next billion Internet users, issues surrounding the affordability of broadband access and the need for further investment in infrastructure remain significant obstacles.



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- Increasing levels of technological standardisation and interoperability (potentially coupled with pressure from regulators) is likely to result in long term disintegration of many vertically integrated business models which ring fence consumers into proprietary walled gardens.
- Opportunities will potentially arise for new proprietary cross-industry/horizontal value chains.
- Increasing erosion of location as an obstacle to access to information and services.

Q1: How will the consumptive tastes, preferences and political/economic aspirations of the new global middle class affect the demographic and cultural landscape of the information environment?

Q2: How can governments in the developing world can successfully transition from taxing technology purchases and infrastructure projects towards incentivising technology adoption as multiplier of jobs and economic growth?

Q3: How long can vertically integrated business models (e.g. Amazon/Apple) resist long term trends towards standardisation and interoperability?

Q4: What would be the likely consequences of new proprietary horizontal cross-industry business models on the information environment?

Q5: What are the implications of mobile payments and financial services for the developing world?

CATEGORY 4: Technological Trends

- Vast and expanding data sets acquired by governments and companies through their interactions with Internet users (in conjunction with that generated by scientific research, surveillance and smart object sensors), combined with an accelerated capacity to process and analyse information will expand the possibilities for innovative public/commercial services whilst simultaneously enabling sophisticated profiling of individuals and social groups.
- Mobile will become the primary platform for access to information content and services which will empower new socio-economic groups through transforming access to healthcare, education and government/financial services.
- Advances in artificial intelligence will enable a) next generation of web browsers to move beyond key word analysis and evaluate the specific content of websites/pages (the semantic web); b) networked devices to combine speech recognition, machine translation and speech synthesis to support real time multilingual voice translation; and c) cloud based crowd sourced translation checking of webpage text.
- The capacity of 3D printing technology to create information-based physical objects using digital blueprints will revolutionise the concept of “access to information”.
- The explosion in data traffic will require network operators to invest in upgrading their communications infrastructure at the same time as their core revenue streams and profits are being squeezed an expanding range of data hungry “over-the-top” services and applications (e.g. Skype, FaceTime...etc).



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- Traffic monitoring and network management technologies designed to optimise network performance and protect consumers from online threats will also have implications for Internet privacy and net neutrality.

Q1: How can we balance the benefits of increasingly intelligent and automated data collection and processing against concerns about the privacy and security of personal information?

Q2: Will the semantic web enhance access to information, research productivity and economic innovation – or will it simultaneously support more efficient Internet censorship, user monitoring and content blocking?

Q3: Assuming current trends in artificial intelligence supported translation continue to progress, what will be the likely consequences of a truly global, accessible, multilingual and multicultural Internet?

Q4: How can the substantial benefits 3D printing technology be exploited, particularly in developing countries, without replaying (potentially on an even greater scale) the political/legal/commercial battles which have engulfed the music and film industries?

Q5: How can the explosion of data traffic be accommodated within a sustainable business model which delivers the necessary investment in new communications infrastructure whilst preserving the principle of net neutrality and a level playing field for the transmission and consumption of information from different public, commercial and individual sources?

We would like to thank you in advance for contributing your time, skills and expertise to this important and exciting project. The IFLA Trend Report will serve as a key reference document for the global information community, and the discussion and submitted papers of the expert group will play a crucial role in ensuring the quality and comprehensiveness of this study.

Please do not hesitate to contact Andrea Beccalli (andrea.beccalli@ifla.org) or me if you have any questions or queries in relation to either the specific content of your paper or the submission process.

Kind regards,

Stuart

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