

The report will discuss and focus on Internet accessible information and censorship; present an overview of the global situation relating to libraries and information services and intellectual freedom; look at the Internet as the information tool of the 21st century; introduce the topic 'libraries and conflicts', which sadly enough has become more and more pressing for the international library community; and finally discuss some of the possibilities on how to respond when intellectual freedoms are at stake.

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The IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report 2002: 'Libraries, Conflicts and the Internet' is the second volume of The IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series. The first volume, The IFLA/FAIFE World Report: 'Libraries and Intellectual Freedom' was published in 2001.

The Summary Report was initiated by the IFLA/FAIFE Committee and developed by the editorial team and the IFLA/FAIFE office.

We wish to record the invaluable contributions of our co-contributors Ekaterina Genieva, Stuart

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Alex Byrne and Susanne Seidelin
May 30, 2002

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Introduction

Alex Byrne & Susanne Seidelin

“A library is an arsenal of liberty.”
Unknown

Mission of IFLA/FAIFE

In August 2001 the Executive Board of The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) confirmed the terms of reference of the Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (IFLA/FAIFE)¹:

- FAIFE is an initiative within IFLA to defend and promote the basic human rights defined in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The FAIFE Committee and Office further freedom of access to information and freedom of expression in all aspects, directly or indirectly, related library and information services.
- FAIFE monitors the state of intellectual freedom within the library and information community worldwide, supports IFLA policy development and cooperation with other international

human rights organisations, and responds to violations of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression.

FAIFE is an IFLA Core Activity that builds on the excellent work pursued over many years through IFLA’s Divisions, Sections and Core Programs, but with a focus on human rights, intellectual freedom and the barriers to freedom of access to information and freedom of expression. The main focus of our work is to ensure that our clients, the peoples of the world, may “seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

IFLA/FAIFE’S mandate is clearly drawn from Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

IFLA/FAIFE operates independently and does not support any specific political, economic or other special interests except the promotion and defence of intellectual freedom through unrestricted access to information.

The role of libraries and information services

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual both to hold and express opinions and to seek and receive information; it is the basis of democracy; and it is at the core of library service. In an increasingly interconnected world, information is more crucial than ever. The human right to freedom of expression and freedom of access to information is the foundation of both individual and societal autonomy. Thus unhindered access to information is essential to freedom, equality, global understanding and peace.

The role of libraries and information services to defend this universal right, ensuring that it is not compromised nor abrogated, is closely connected with the central responsibility of the library and information profession to safeguard freedom of access to information by all people, regardless of media and frontiers.

While taking steps to respect individual cultures and individual preferences, libraries and information services must stand for freedom for all, in both expressing their views and obtaining and using information. Barriers to the flow of information should be removed, especially those that

promote inequality, poverty, and despair. The challenges posed by unequal economic capacities must be addressed. In addition, the war against illiteracy must continue to be waged and the good work of libraries in promoting reading and information for all must be extended. Efforts must be redoubled to implement services and provide resources in appropriate formats which will ensure that all people can obtain the information they need to pursue and enjoy their lives regardless of their capacity to read printed text.

Libraries and information services and their customers in countries all over the world are daily facing the consequences of censorship in various degrees from total governmental control of all information supplied to local censorship of titles or websites issued by authorities or groups with special interests. Living up to the commitment of offering their clients access to relevant resources and services without restriction and to opposing any form of censorship is therefore a professionally challenging task.

How can libraries and information services ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services are governed only by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views? And how can libraries and information services play the important role of contributing to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help safeguard democratic values and universal civil rights? There is no easy answer to these questions - they depend on the local or national situation in

which libraries and information services operate but the principles are fundamental and universal.

However, the worldwide increase of censorship - and self-censorship - in the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 has reinforced the importance of promoting vigorously internationally accepted values and ethics. Applying international guidelines and manifestos in libraries and information services alone will not ensure the intellectual freedom of our clients. But adherence to these principles will make it easier to defend them. Only through cooperation and the support of the international library community can libraries and information services and library organisations in each country defend and promote the core principles of our profession. This Summary Report will discuss these aspects further in the chapter How to respond when intellectual freedoms are at stake.

IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series

The IFLA/FAIFE World Report on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, published in 2001, was the first attempt to systematically collect information on freedom of access to information related to libraries and information services and their customers and provided a picture on the status of intellectual freedom with regards to libraries and information services and librarianship in a global perspective.

The report represents a significant achievement but covers only 46 countries, about 30% of the

countries represented in IFLA. Ideally, the report should cover all member countries and present a reliable and authoritative summary of the state of intellectual freedom with regards to libraries and information services around the globe.

To offer timely and detailed summaries of the state of intellectual freedom and libraries worldwide, the IFLA/FAIFE Committee has developed **The IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series** which consists of two publications, **the IFLA/FAIFE World Report** and **the IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report**. Our ambition is high. We would like the series to become the authoritative source on libraries and information services and intellectual freedom in a global perspective. However, our success in achieving this ambition depends on the availability of the necessary funding for the editorial work. Each publication in The IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series will be launched at the annual IFLA Conference. The IFLA/FAIFE World Report will be published bi-annually and the IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report in alternate years.

The next IFLA/FAIFE World Report will thus be published in 2003. It and future Reports will depict the state of freedom of access to information in the countries represented combined with discussion, analysis and general conclusions on the state of affairs. Currently, the editors are developing a new concept for the report to enhance the general quality and consistency of individual reports, and to increase the number of submissions and the amount of information on

each country. It will then be easier to compare the status country-by-country and region-by-region.

The alternately published IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report, a shorter report, will provide a global update on the status of intellectual freedom and freedom of access to information. The IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report will also focus on the prevailing international political situation and its impact on freedom of access to information issues and libraries and information services. Consequently, successive IFLA/FAIFE Summary Reports will identify areas of special interest and concern to the international library and information community.

The IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series should thus become a useful source on freedom of access to information related to libraries and information services and their role in the development of civil society. We trust that it will inspire and encourage colleagues worldwide to engage in the important work of promoting and defending that role.

General update on the conclusions of the World Report 2001

The most encouraging conclusions of the first IFLA/FAIFE World Report were the many country reports that bore witness to a great professional dedication and a capacity to focus on the main problems. Many contributors depicted the future library vision of their country, and almost all embraced international cooperation as the very

instrument of development and the safeguarding of freedom of access to information.

However, the IFLA/FAIFE World Report generally concluded that not all is well in regard to freedom of access to information in the world.² Many examples were given of various kinds of violations of intellectual freedom and limitations of freedom of access to information demonstrating the enormous differences in approaches to human rights. The numerous reports on censorship and other barriers of economic, educational and constitutional character also demonstrated the enormous differences in the standards of library services and professionalism in the world leading to the conclusion that the information gap is rapidly increasing. On one side, we find the countries that have safeguarded library and information services through legislation, adequate financing and high standards. On the other, those countries that for various reasons are unable or unwilling to provide similar services. The report also touched upon the major concerns and the challenges we face in regard to the digital divide. Focusing on Internet accessibility, this year's IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report will further discuss the digital divide between the information rich and information poor countries.

A broad view of the past year shows the state of affairs is unchanged or to some extent growing worse. There seems to be a tendency of more governmental and regional control concerning intellectual freedoms all over the world as an effect of the terrorist attacks in the USA on

September 11, 2001. The consequences of the change of power in a number of African and European countries are yet to be seen but the trend appears to be towards greater restrictions on access to information. A case in point is the continuing censorship of library acquisitions and activities in some of the municipalities in southern France: this is a matter of special concern in democratic Europe. The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations, EBLIDA has put the case before the European Parliament and the European Parliament Committee on Petitions has now undertaken an investigation.³

Over the past years, IFLA/FAIFE has followed the situation with regards to freedom of access to information in Cuba issuing reports in 1999 and 2001⁴. A panel debate was held at the IFLA conference in Boston 2001, and IFLA Council adopted a resolution on freedom of access to information and the effects of the US embargo.⁵ On May 20, 2002 the president of the US announced that the administration had no intentions of lifting the embargo. That decision will extend the ‘collateral damage’ caused by the embargo by continuing to effect “a severe reduction in the capacity of Cuban libraries and citizens to purchase information materials and related technologies due to the economic effects of the embargo” and the “indirect disruption of access to information by Cubans and Cuban libraries caused by the effects on power supply, telecommunications and other aspects of life in Cuba”.

We have witnessed the armed conflicts in Afghanistan and other parts of the world as well as the dramatic escalation of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians which is filling our television screens and newspapers at the time of writing this Introduction and having a devastating effect on the peoples of that region. Naturally, the personal tragedies of human casualties and other impacts on peoples’ lives overshadow the threats and actual damage to freedom of access to information and freedom of expression. But both are at stake both during and in the wake of such conflicts and both can cause long term damage to communities and their cultural and social well being. The destruction of libraries, library materials and administrative and cultural heritage documents has been reported in Afghanistan and in the Palestinian Authority areas and is currently investigated by IFLA/FAIFE.

As has been demonstrated too often, the working conditions of the press are often very difficult and dangerous in areas of conflict. Organisations such as the World Association of Newspapers (WAN)⁶ and the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)⁷ have reported harassment, imprisonment and murder of journalists. In many cases they are misinformed and prevented from entering areas of conflict. Media manipulation is rife. When the press is hindered from reporting on events, its ability to inform society decreases. This violates the right of citizens to form their own independent views. Without freedom of expression there can be no freedom of access to information, libraries and informa-

tion services cannot safeguard access without information to access. And without histories and other records, the media and people are unable to understand the meaning of events. Freedom of expression is intertwined with unhindered access to information. Both are necessary throughout the world as our inability to comprehend fully events such as those suffered by the peoples of Afghanistan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority areas compromises our ability to understand our interconnected world.

Since the launch of the first IFLA/FAIFE World Report in August 2001 the world has witnessed the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and in the subsequent 'war against terrorism'. In several countries parliaments have passed terrorist acts. Most include provisions limiting access to information and, often, freedom of speech. At present we do not know the full consequences of the implementation of these laws but the development is of great concern. In some countries freedom of access to information is definitely at stake. Surveillance of Internet use and e-mail communication in libraries and information services may be one of the undesirable consequences for libraries and information services and their users. Libraries and information services may thus be prevented from protecting the privacy of their clients. The Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association (OIF/ALA) has followed this development in the US closely, issuing statements and reports that support the right to freedom of information.⁸

A general increase in the use of Internet filtering, censorship and self-censorship are other examples of how we, the peoples of the world, react, in the name of democracy, when we feel democracy is threatened. In this context, it seems relevant to contemplate how far we will go to protect ourselves against terrorism. Is the sacrifice of our freedoms, of human rights, worth the price? And how can we safeguard the role of libraries and information services as institutions providing access to information, ideas and works of imagination in any medium and regardless of frontiers, serving as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture, offering essential support for independent decision-making, cultural development, research and lifelong learning by both individuals and groups?

The use of Internet is generally growing by the month. This fact underlines the role of the Internet as one of the fastest and most important mediums we have. At the same time the information gap between developed and developing countries increases. Though we are also witnessing a growth in Internet use in developing countries it cannot in any way match that of the information-rich nations. To this end, the past year has shown an increase in the use-by-payment services on the Internet. Information that earlier was free of charge has now become a fast growing source of income for many information providers. Libraries and information services in developing countries, but also some in the developed, cannot afford to pay for these services and neither can their clients. Therefore there is reason

to be concerned about a development that instead of narrowing the so-called digital divide seems to further decrease access to Internet available information. The special focus on the Internet, libraries and information services and conflicts in this year's IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report is a contribution to advance the discussion of these topics.

Focus of the Summary Report 2002

The IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report 2002: **Libraries, Conflicts and the Internet** is the first of its kind. The report will discuss and focus on Internet accessible information and censorship; present an overview of the global situation relating to libraries and information services and intellectual freedom; look at the Internet as the information tool of the 21st century; introduce the topic

'libraries and conflicts,' which sadly enough has become more and more pressing for the international library community; and finally discuss some of the possibilities on how to respond when intellectual freedoms are at stake.

We would like to encourage readers to comment and forward ideas for future reports to faife@ifla.org.

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An Overview of Global Internet Access Barriers

Stuart Hamilton

The 'Informatisation' of Society

The last decade has seen a great increase in Internet use all over the world. As more individuals, institutions and companies go online more information than ever before is being passed along the highways of the Internet. This explosion in information availability is backed up by a rise in personal computer ownership stimulated by falling costs of hardware in many areas of the globe. Based on current predictions, access to information in homes, workplaces and libraries will continue to increase as we move further into the 21st century.

It has been proposed by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens and Herbert Schiller - that the world we live in today is seeing an 'informatisation' of established relationships. This means that information has a heightened presence in society and the flow of this information has a special significance for individuals, businesses and governments, all of whom are adjusting to

the new medium of the Internet and the opportunities it brings with regards to information access.

Librarians, as facilitators of information access, have had to adjust very quickly to the new demands placed upon them by society. The last five years have seen attitudes of staff and library users towards Internet use change dramatically. In the developed world especially, it is becoming hard for staff to remember a time before the presence of the Internet in the library. Users, particularly new, younger users, demand the presence of the net in the library as essential, along with expertise and guidance in its use. The library now offers access to more information resources than ever before and a freedom to investigate the like of which most users have never experienced previously.

New freedoms

These new freedoms are not only available in the library; they are in theory available to any

Internet user across the world. Individuals are now free to express themselves globally via the Internet, and to get their point of view across to a vast audience with the greatest of ease. Previously marginalized sections of society have found the Internet provides a great forum for the exposition of ideas and beliefs, whether they are distasteful to the majority of people or not. The last decade has seen the Internet adopted by the oppressed and the disenfranchised but also by the more underground elements of society such as the pornographers, and the criminal fraternity.

As these elements continue to grow online their presence is highlighted by the media, and their activities are brought to the attention of the authorities and governing powers. The Internet has in some parts of the world become a by-word for all that is wrong with society - it is where one can find instructions on bomb-making, information on race-hate movements and access to all sorts of perversions. It has become a scapegoat at the same time as a saviour, and now it finds itself having to answer its critics only a few years after its incorporation into mainstream society.

Society

The freedom to express oneself on the global stage has contributed to the belief that the Internet is inherently democratising and therefore the saviour of those living in oppressive regimes. Without a centralised headquarters, and by being everywhere at once, it may seem that everyone will have access to the information that is available via the web.

The oppressed will be heard and tyranny overthrown. In reality however, this is far from the case.

Gradually, instead of a new equality of freedom for all Internet users around the world, cultural, political and religious barriers are being re-produced on the net. Societies all over the world are seeking to impose restrictions on Internet use, often in the form of Internet-specific legislation or the extension of existing print and broadcast regulations to cyberspace. Government controlled servers can filter content and block sites, and even force surveillance equipment onto Internet Service Providers in order to monitor Internet traffic and communication.

Rise of corporate society

Alongside the reclamation of power by governments through legislation and surveillance, globalisation has also interfered with the flow of data on the Internet by taking some of the control of this flow away from nation states and placing it in the hands of the corporations. The corporate world, keen to protect its economic well-being and exploit the new medium, has begun to impress the values of the market upon many areas of the Internet, not only on the high-profile e-commerce sector that it is in their interests to promote.

After a slow start, the corporations have rallied to protect their interests online through the use of legal action and business expansion. The downfall

of the file sharing service Napster and the pending lawsuits against the similar Morpheus service is an example of trans-national music corporations seeking to protect their profits and their monopoly over music distribution. On top of this, media corporations in the United States are lobbying the Federal Communications Commission to pass legislation that will give them greater control of broadband Internet access and eventually eradicate smaller ISPs from the market.

We are also beginning to see a move away from free content on the Internet towards paying for information. As the fallout from the dot.com crash subsides, we are discovering that only companies with firm business models are succeeding in the market. If information, due to market forces, is only being created for and made available to those able to pay then large amounts of the world's population will be left watching the opportunities of our new digital information age pass by.

Consequences for libraries

There is a real danger that a combination of information as a commodity and the priorities of the large corporations will transform the Internet from a tool of democracy and a voice of the disenfranchised into an extension of the high street where all information costs money. Combine this with an increased willingness of governments around the world to restrict free expression and access to online resources, and the future for free access to information looks bleak. In order for

libraries to continue their role as gateways to information for all, regardless of wealth, influence or interest, librarians must be aware of challenges being faced globally so we can combine as a community to tackle barriers to information access wherever we find them. This IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report 2002 gives a brief overview of some of the problems currently being experienced by defenders of freedom of access to information around the world today.

Asia/Pacific

Many countries in the Asian/Pacific region are experiencing various types of access barriers with regards to Internet-based information. In some cases these barriers are thrown up by infrastructure deficiencies and the problems of wiring huge, often dispersed areas (India, Indonesia) but there are a significant number of countries that have restrictions placed on Internet-accessible information by governments. Censorship, surveillance and the spread of propaganda are combining in many areas to restrict freedom of access to information and freedom of expression.

At one end of the scale in Asia are countries like Burma and North Korea, where Internet access is tightly controlled by the ruling powers. Both countries are keen to limit access to information online and any communication with opposition sympathisers abroad. Burma requires all telecommunications devices to be registered with the government under threat of imprisonment, thus restricting computer access to the favoured elite.

Even those with computers are rarely allowed to venture past the country's intranet onto the world wide web. The posting of anti-government information on the net is outlawed and instead government propaganda is disseminated via the country's main website, Myanmar.com. It is uncertain who, if anyone, in North Korea has access to the Internet, as the government has not officially opened up access to the web. Development of a web infrastructure is taking place however, although a model similar to Burma can be expected with high costs of access and firewalls in place to restrict access to inappropriate information.

If the Burmese and North Korean authorities represent the tightest grip on Internet access, there are a variety of other approaches to be found in the Asian/Pacific region. China struggles with its desire to increase economic development while at the same time maintaining control of the country's overall political direction, something it fears widespread Internet access might undermine. To this end, and with the help of US software firms, it has begun construction of a huge surveillance architecture called Golden Shield that will enable monitoring of online communications and restrict what information can be accessed via the Internet¹. China has cracked down on websites containing anti-government information or Falun Gong materials, and other countries - such as Malaysia, Vietnam and Laos - have followed their lead by restricting web access and filtering websites and threatening prison sentences for offenders². The monitoring of online communications in these countries, as well as in places like

Pakistan and Russia, is a serious threat to freedom of expression. Often this monitoring is made easier, as in the case of Laos or Vietnam, by the government controlling the country's ISPs.

Of equal importance in the region is the type of censorship practised by Singapore or South Korea, both countries with vibrant Internet infrastructures and increasing patterns of use. In South Korea, the government introduced filtering on all machines in public PC centres, schools and libraries in July 2000³. In future, websites must carry a tag indicating content in an effort to prevent minors from harmful materials. This tag conforms to the Platform for Internet Content Selection which is a content labelling infrastructure designed to aid website selection choices. PICS is used in tandem with a rating system (such as that designed by the Internet Content Ratings Association) and lets users determine a set of criteria that allows only acceptable sites to be accessed on their machines. In South Korea this means websites need to be rated in order to be accepted on government computers where the determining criteria have been set up to protect minors. Mainstream gay and lesbian sites have been censored, and the government has also outlawed online protest. The problem is that if government is determining the criteria sites must meet in order to be accessed then it is acting as a censor with its own rules and perspectives. An example of this came in 2001 when one of the country's leading gay and lesbian sites was banned by the government criteria after it was labelled as 'Obscenity and perversion'⁴. In Singa-

pore, where accessing sites advocating homosexuality or lesbianism is also forbidden, the same situation may come to pass as the Broadcasting Authority is considering calls from a national parents group to implement a PICS system on public machines that children use⁵.

In the Pacific region, Australia is having a censorship debate of an entirely different kind. Here, a two-tiered system of Commonwealth and State legislation exists that concentrates on ensuring both ISPs and content providers refrain from publishing content on the web that is unsuitable for children, even if this material is only made available for adults. Content is to be judged along the guidelines set out by the Australian board of film classification where films unsuitable for minors are rated 'R'. The problem is that the legislation applies not only to pornography but also to social and political issues such as crime, suicide, emotional trauma and religion. In light of this, Electronic Frontiers Australia has declared that the effects of proposed state legislation in New South Wales will be a ban on adult discourse regarding social and political issues on Australian Internet sites, newsgroups, forums and archived email discussions⁶. More relevantly for librarians, if online content is classified in the same way as film librarians who supervise premises connected to the Internet could be prosecuted for 'screening' objectionable matter to minors.

The government in New Zealand has recently proposed legislation that would force ISPs to install surveillance devices onto networks in

order to help law enforcers capture private emails and messages⁷. While the government claims this legislation will simply bring New Zealand into line with other countries, it has been noted that the bill bears a resemblance to the US Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act, which has been criticised by privacy advocates in America⁸.

Africa

Africa suffers from the lowest Internet penetration rates in the world. Telecommunications infrastructure deficiencies such as this mean that only 4.15 million - 0.5% of the population - people use the Internet in Africa, compared with 166.14 million people, or 59.75% of the population in the United States⁹. More than half of the continent's Internet users are in South Africa. Economic problems are at the root of the low Internet penetration, and a recent report from Kenya's Internet Providers' Association states that even connecting to the Internet costs Africa \$500 million a year due to western telecommunications companies charging full rate for connecting to international networks¹⁰. Mozambique, Sudan and Angola all suffer from low numbers of telephone lines and high call costs. Ethiopia has an 80% rural population, one of the lowest telephone lines per capita in the world and a government that has forbidden any satellite transmissions, even for International organisations. This has led to a waiting list of over 10,000 potential Internet users¹¹. Even in South Africa, only 6% of homes have access to the Internet.

On top of this, geographical factors such as dispersed populations within large countries make Internet projects difficult to get off the ground. The lack of roads and electricity in some areas is a major handicap. Cultural factors such as high illiteracy rates and a lack of sites relevant to rural populations due to language and content must be considered. These factors reduce take up of Internet services even in areas where facilities are available. The majority of telephone lines and adequate infrastructure resources are to be found in capital cities, making the Internet a primarily urban phenomenon.

However, with all 54 of Africa's countries now connected to the Internet and penetration increasing, it is no surprise to find usage restrictions similar to those in the rest of the world occurring in some African countries. Religious influence has led to the blocking of pornographic sites in Sudan while Somalia is a user of the 'Clean Internet Services' program imported from Saudi Arabia, restricting access to all sites with sexual content and content that is 'morally unacceptable'. In countries like Sudan and Somalia, with their religious and economic links to the middle-east (Somalia is the leading African economic partner of the United Arab Emirates) it is clear that the Islamic attitude to Internet use will continue to affect the climate of free expression on the Internet¹².

Government influence, on the other hand, is felt in the monitoring of web use and communications that occurs in countries such as Angola,

Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. The lack of competition in the telecommunications sector in Africa makes this sort of monitoring easier for governments to achieve, as state controlled ISPs follow the government's access and monitoring policies. Emails are monitored in Ethiopia and if the government finds fault with an Internet user's activities their telephone lines can be disabled with no explanation. Angola has been known to monitor journalists' online communications leading to some users switching to ISPs in other countries. Zimbabwe, meanwhile, passed the Post and Telecommunications Act in 2000 and tightened it with the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Bill 2001, authorizing the monitoring of email messages and interception of communications¹³.

The Middle East

In the Middle East there is a greater concentration on the blocking of materials considered sensitive to both government and religious authority. The use and potential of technology and the Internet must be seen to come second to the traditions and culture of the region.

Use of the Internet is booming in Saudi Arabia with 500,000 people going online in the last two years. The government is keen to harness the Internet for e-commerce but, like in Saudi society in general, personal freedoms are restricted when it comes to surfing habits. While unofficial statistics reported that nearly half of Saudi Internet users are women, a women only Internet café was closed down in April 2001 for reasons of

‘public morality’¹⁴. All Internet traffic to and from the country must go through a single central control centre near Riyadh where sites offering porn or anti-government material are filtered out using the latest technology provided by US firms. The New York Times reports that the blocking software prevents access to sites such as the Committee for Defence of Human Rights in the Arabian Peninsula, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia or others recounting the history of Saudi Arabia¹⁵.

Iran was named as one of Reporters Sans Frontiers ‘Enemies of the Internet’ in 2001, but recent reports suggest a more enlightened approach to the Internet¹⁶. Once online, access is allegedly unfiltered, although many cyber cafés were closed down in 2001 supposedly because the popularity of online chat meant people were not using telephone services. Elsewhere however, blocking of websites occurs in the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Syria. In Iraq access problems are exacerbated by the costs of access and sanctions, but these three countries have a common factor - there is only one government controlled ISP available which makes blocking and surveillance easier. The type of material filtered out is similar to Saudi Arabia, with anti-government, morally unacceptable and pro-Israel sites being blocked.

Along with filtering, surveillance of web use in the Middle-East is fairly common. Bahrain, which has previously blocked sites critical of the ruling family and recently blocked opposition websites in the run up to October 2002 elections,

has a culture of web surveillance¹⁷. What can be seen in the Middle-east region is a conflict similar to that found in countries like China - the need to open up to the Internet era while retaining a balance that protects the prevailing power structure, in this case the authority, morals and culture associated with Islam and Arab society. To this end governments, in collaboration with religious authorities, are keen to remain in control of what is available for accessing and who is trying to get round restrictions.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Chile have seen Internet growth increase over the last two years, but a significant gap still exists between these countries and the likes of Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru where telecommunications infrastructure deficiencies hinder Internet penetration¹⁸. Even within countries experiencing Internet use growth there is a further divide to consider - the gap between urban and rural computer users. In Argentina, for example, Internet use is a primarily urban phenomenon, with the majority of users to be found in the capital¹⁹. This use is under threat however - the collapse of the economy has led to a growth in online banking but predictions are for a virtual halt in Internet growth over the next year.

Elsewhere in the region, the most significant problems with regards to Internet access are to be found in Cuba. Here the single party state finds

itself in a similar position to China where the wide range of information available on the net creates a conflict with the goals of the state. However, where the Chinese government has blocked websites to restrict access to information, the Cuban government has censored by restricting access to the Internet itself. Out of 11 million Cubans only 40,000 people are allowed Internet access and email accounts, and most of these are academics or government workers²⁰. Enterprising ordinary Cubans can access the net at university, via the black market in passwords or use email by borrowing foreign friends' accounts, but they run the risk of surveillance by the authorities at all times²¹. Individuals at home are almost never granted Internet access - the government outlawed the sale of PCs to members of the public in March 2002²² - and it is left to institutions such as universities, some places of employment and, in the near future, libraries to provide connection facilities. At the same time as controlling access points, the Cuban government is also developing a national Intranet which would allow access to web pages hosted in Cuba and national email but not to external sites - in effect a policy of information censorship²³.

Cuba aside, access to Internet-accessible information in the countries of South America and the Caribbean seems to be generally similar to levels of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression in other media. The real problem the region faces is low penetration rates - only 25 million people out of a total population of over 518 million are online in the whole of Latin

America²⁴. Behind this figure are similar problems to those found in Africa - infrastructure deficiencies, dispersed rural populations, cultural factors such as language barriers and illiteracy, a concentration of resources in urban areas and a lack of finance for IT investment. With large amounts of people unable to afford even a simple telephony service, the Internet has clear economic barriers to overcome before it is able to contribute to free expression in the region.

Europe

In Europe at present there appears to be less emphasis on censorship and more on data retention and monitoring. The issue of user privacy is one that libraries have considered before and will continue to be concerned with in the Internet age.

Germany, however, does have censorship issues and far-right hate sites seem to have the highest profile. As the German constitution prohibits censorship it has come down to the ISPs themselves to remove unwanted sites from the web at the behest of users or the authorities²⁵. In December 2000 German legal authorities ruled that websites aiming racist propaganda at German audiences could be prosecuted under German law, but the problem remains as to how to deal with sites hosted abroad. The local government in Dusseldorf is trying to force ISPs to block specific foreign sites but this approach is at odds with the official EU position, which maintains that content blocking is impractical and recommends filtering

and self-regulation instead²⁶. In the meantime, steps have been taken to protect minors from harmful content in German libraries and most libraries use filtering software to ensure that dissemination of harmful materials is restricted to users of legal age.

Spain is also at a stage where governments are prepared to legislate to shut down unacceptable websites. A proposed bill would enable a government approved agency to close websites without having to receive court approval. This has implications for freedom of speech, not least because the provisions of the bill relating to closing sites are vaguely defined, and critics worry about the potential for abuse²⁷.

In the UK a significant piece of legislation was passed in 2000. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act requires ISPs to install software that would enable police monitoring of subscribers' communications traffic. Within the last year a voluntary code has been introduced asking ISPs to keep this information for 12 months. Previously only billing information was held. In France, where ISPs must offer their subscribers filtering software but it is not mandatory to install it, hosting companies must preserve connection data so that website creators can be identified.

Meanwhile, the European Union moves closer to ratifying the EU Convention on Cyber Crime, a piece of legislation designed to combat online fraud, hacking and terrorism but under attack from privacy groups for its vague limits on police

surveillance powers and unwarranted levels of data collection and storage. Essentially, say opponents, the Convention will render encryption of personal correspondence meaningless, as authorities can order encryption keys to be handed over on demand, and legislate for the sorts of data sweeping and mass Internet surveillance outlawed under the European Convention on Human Rights²⁸. Also controversial is the proposed criminalizing of online hate speech due to the problems this poses to freedom of expression. In countries such as the United States, who helped draw up the treaty and have been invited to ratify it, the hate speech portion of the Cybercrime treaty is seen as a threat to the principles protected under the first amendment²⁹.

Alongside the convention on Cybercrime is a proposed amendment to a 1997 EU Directive on privacy in the telecommunications sector that will grant law enforcement agencies access to Internet traffic and communications data previously only kept for clarifying customer bills. This information will now have to be held for longer periods than the previous two-month limit. The amendment is controversial for a number of reasons, not least because President Bush requested the EU implement these powers - that even the USA PATRIOT act does not have - in October 2001³⁰. It was initially thought the directive would remain unamended but now increased surveillance powers seem likely, despite critics maintaining the existing text was adequate for combating terrorism³¹.

The Freedom House 2001 survey on global press freedom found that of all European countries, only Albania, Turkey and parts of the former Yugoslavia moderately censored the Internet³². It is true that Europe as a whole is tolerant of Internet content and has good levels of access, but this advanced stage of usage is played out in a climate where governments are keen to retain more control of Internet traffic. In Hungary, for example, concerns have been raised regarding the increased interest of the security forces in online data in the last year³³. Trends such as this and the type of surveillance powers envisaged in the EU Convention on Cybercrime and realised in the UK's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act do little to create an atmosphere of online expression free of reprisals.

North America

The main Internet issue for libraries in North America over the past year has been the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The CIPA is the third attempt by the US Congress to censor Internet materials after the first two were overturned by the judiciary³⁴. It proposes that libraries that receive certain forms of federal funding, no matter how small, must implement 'Internet safety policies'. This means the mandatory installation and use of content blocking software on all library terminals. Filters must be used at all times, by children, adults and library staff in the hope of blocking obscenity, child pornography and material harmful to minors. In April 2002 it was challenged in the courts by the American Library

Association (ALA) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech.

The debate that sprung up as a result of the legal challenge to CIPA is worth noting. The US government's line is that the legislation is not a direct prohibition on free speech, and instead is more of a financial provision - if libraries don't want to filter, they don't accept the funding. The ALA and ACLU say that filtering software doesn't only block the required categories and its limitations mean that access to vast amounts of relevant information is denied. If libraries are forced to filter, they say, some agent, be it human or machine, will be responsible for a list of banned sites. This agent will be a censor, and library users will be subject to censorship. Large amounts of discussion has ensued with regards to the effectiveness of filtering software, with both sides in the case producing witnesses arguing for and against its imposition on library terminals.

What the CIPA appeal highlighted is the existence of a genuine censorship debate in the United States. A real fear exists on the part of family and religious groups that the Internet presents a terrifying threat to children due to the perceived pornographic pervasiveness online. Free speech advocates and librarians, on the other hand, resist the government imposition of censorship via a funding technicality and stress that responsibility for a child's Internet surfing habits lies with parents, not libraries.

The CIPA is not the only piece of legislation that threatens to have an impact on freedom of access to information online. In March 2002 the world's most popular search engine, Google, announced it was removing search results featuring sites critical of the Church of Scientology. The basis for this was the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act that the Church of Scientology used to make Google remove links to sites using copyrighted Scientology material to criticise the church. As the sites concerned were hosted abroad, the Scientologists went after the only link to the US - the search engine based in Mountain View, California. If Google failed to comply then they would be subject to a claim of copyright infringement³⁵. Google reinstated the sites in search results the next day after word of their reaction to the demands of the Scientologists spread around the net. The use of a copyright law to quell online criticism caused uproar amongst free speech advocates and is an important occurrence with regards to online information now that the net becomes more regulated by legislation.

As the Internet becomes increasingly commodified and subject to the whims of law and business, it will be essential to examine proposed legislation for potential effects on freedom of access to information and freedom of expression. An example of this can be seen in the way corporations in the US are looking to consolidate their hold on domestic information markets. Home Internet access began in the US through dial-up modem connections but now high-speed broadband access - the method of choice for

information delivery by new media firms - is being made available on an increasing scale by cable companies. The major media organisations in the US have been lobbying the Federal Communications Commission to end restrictions on the number of cable and TV stations they can own and to regulate Internet service in the same way as existing cable service thus enabling them to extend their monopoly into the Internet broadband era. This will in effect end the era of open access to the Internet where an unlimited number of Internet Service Providers were allowed to connect to the network³⁶.

The problem here is that content - once protected by the large number of ISPs - will now be in the hands of a small number of cable companies. Taking its cue from the example of cable television, the argument is that cable companies provide at least part of the programming (content) on their networks and at the same time the pipeline for transmitting. The cable companies therefore, have a lot of say over the content transmitted because they get to decide who can use their network. As Lawrence Lessig, professor at Stanford law School, has said "You get the right to innovate (provide content) depending on whether AOL or AT&T or the music industry like your innovation"³⁷. Or whether you can afford to buy 'air' time.

In the US therefore, the key threats to freedom of access to information on the Internet come from the growing market for filtering software, from new forms of legislation designed to protect copyright holders and from the new environment

that sees corporations applying the rules of the market to all aspects of online activity. The commodification of the Internet is guaranteed to deny the less well off members of society access to certain types of information.

Post September 11 legislation

The September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States have contributed greatly to a change in the information environment around the world. The greatest consequence for libraries as information providers is the USA PATRIOT act passed by the US Congress in October 2001. This gives the authorities greater access to user information held by ISPs and authorisation to spy on web surfing, including terms entered into search engines³⁸. These acts can now be carried out with minimal input from the judiciary, and with a very low level of proof. Library Internet use records can be demanded by authorities and it has been made possible for surveillance software to be installed on library servers if needs be.

The attacks in America led to the introduction of new anti-terror laws in many countries and the USA PATRIOT act has been the template for much of this legislation. In the new post-September 11 environment, governments are keen to control more of the information flow on the Internet, both in terms of information provision and also in the records of users' surfing and communications. Following the lead shown by USA PATRIOT, both the UK and France have extended the length of time web users' data can

be held by ISPs. Security forces can now more easily access this information and the laws in France effectively make encryption of electronic messages an offence³⁹. In October, Germany rushed through a bill forcing telecommunications companies to install surveillance software so authorities can better intercept online communications⁴⁰. Spanish anti-globalisation protestors have complained of monitoring by security forces since September 11 who equate them with terrorists⁴¹. This is a worrying trend for freedom of expression on the Internet.

Outside of Europe, Canada's "Law C-36" has also made it easier for intelligence services to institute surveillance on an individual's web traffic. Individuals under surveillance are no longer required to be informed they are being investigated⁴². To further tighten Internet controls in Saudi Arabia, all Internet service providers are now required to keep records of all Internet users in order to track access to forbidden web sites⁴³. Anti-terror bills have restricted freedom of expression in Indonesia, China, Russia, Pakistan, Jordan, Mauritius, Uganda and Zimbabwe⁴⁴. India's anti-terror bill meanwhile, will punish anyone setting up an 'anti-India' website with 5 years in jail⁴⁵. The results of America's terrorist crackdown have been seen in Somalia where the only Internet company was forced to close until January, along with the only telecommunications company, after its international gateway was blocked and its assets frozen by the US who suspected them of terrorist links⁴⁶.

It is the United States however, where librarians have been most affected by the war against terrorism. Since September 11 there has been a reduction in the availability of certain types of information on government websites⁴⁷. Maps, environmental resources, transport information and resources considered to aid terrorists are among the types of information being removed⁴⁸. Federal deposit libraries around the US have been asked to destroy resources considered sensitive in wartime, a move that has caused concern to US librarians⁴⁹. Internet resources made available by non-governmental bodies such as the Federation of US Scientists have been removed, and there are numerous examples of individuals, ISPs and foreign governments closing down websites considered to be linked to terrorists or expressing opinions contrary to government opinion⁵⁰. While the restriction of sensitive information in the public domain is to be expected in the post-September 11 environment, librarians and others are worried that the lack of detailed criteria for what information is to be removed from the web will make things difficult for people who need information for specific, lawful purposes⁵¹. Most notably in this case is the opposition, from the American Library Association amongst others, to the executive act signed by President Bush restricting access to the records of former presidents for an indefinite period of time. Freedom of access to information is suffering as a result, and the ALA is supporting a lawsuit to overturn the order⁵².

The international library community has not

been silent on the issue of freedom of access to information post-September 11. The IFLA/FAIFE statement on Terrorism, the Internet and Free Access to Information laid emphasis on the ability of libraries to offer much needed facilities in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Only by safeguarding access to information can we maintain the ideals of intellectual freedom that is a core responsibility of our profession.

Despite this, there are many more countries around the world that have passed legislation limiting intellectual freedom since September 11. As part of its continuing commitment to monitoring the state of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression on the Internet, FAIFE shall be undertaking work that will lead to the creation of a global map detailing the state of access to Internet accessible resources on a global scale. In turn, this map shall help us prepare future World Reports and enable us to assess whether intellectual freedom is flourishing or languishing around the world.

Conclusion

Freedom of access to information and freedom of expression on the Internet is in danger in many countries around the world. At present, the Internet is not yet able to live up to its reputation as the killer application that will lead to a reduction in gap between the world's information rich and information poor, nor is it able to prove its worth beyond doubt as a tool of democracy. Penetration rates in many areas of the world,

most notably Africa and Latin America are not yet high enough for the Internet to make a significant difference to many people's lives. At the most basic level, a lack of infrastructure, education, IT expertise and access to equipment is hindering access to information on the net. Even when a correct infrastructure is in place the costs of connecting, as Africa is finding out, can be high enough to severely strain developing economies.

Even in more advanced Internet countries however, government imposed restrictions are hindering an atmosphere of free expression on the web. As authorities in Asia most especially, and yet also in Europe, Australasia and the United States, are discovering, it is entirely possible to make life difficult for users who use the Internet to offer viewpoints opposed to the ruling powers. Many countries around the world are guilty of creating an online environment where users are tracked and monitored, their freedom of access to information constricted in an attempt to maintain existing power structures and regulate web use in an age of terrorism.

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The Internet: The Information Tool of the 21st Century

Stuart Hamilton & Alex Byrne & Susanne Seidelin

The global rise of the Internet

According to statistics produced by NUA.com, who are an online source for information on Internet demographics and trends, the number of Internet users worldwide continues to grow at an amazing pace. When judging the following figures, it is instructive to remember that in 1988 only seven countries - Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - were connected to the National Science Foundation Internet backbone developed in the US. Ten years later, according to the International Telecommunication Union, over 200 countries were connected¹.

In their most recent figures, NUA suggest that there are now over 544 million Internet users worldwide, a 19.4% increase on user figures from 12 months before and a figure that equals 8.99% of the world's population. Since their surveys began in 1995 the number of worldwide users of the Internet has increased by over 2000%².

These users are spread unevenly around the globe, with the majority of users based in North America, followed by Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. Growth rates in all regions of the world continue to rise, although vast swathes of the world's population miss out on access due to infrastructure difficulties and the economic costs of wiring countries for the Internet.

Consider the scarcity of telephone lines in Africa, approximately 18 million phone lines for the entire continent, or one for every 50 people. Outside North Africa and South Africa, there is only one line for every 200 people³. Telecommunications infrastructure deficiencies such as this mean that only 4.15 million - 0.5% of the population - people use the Internet in Africa. Contrast this with the United States, where in January 2002 it was estimated that 166.14 million people, or 59.75% of the population, currently use the Internet⁴.

Table 1 illustrates how the world's regions compare in terms of user numbers and Internet penetration.

Table 1: Internet users by region, in millions, and as % of population

REGION	NUMBERS OF USERS (MILLIONS)	POPULATION (MILLIONS)	% OF POPULATION
UNITED STATES AND CANADA*	181.23	314.057	57.71
EUROPE**	171.35	727.360	23.56
ASIA/PACIFIC	157.49	3528.800	4.46
LATIN AMERICA	25.33	518.809	4.88
MIDDLE-EAST	4.65	174.063	2.67
AFRICA	4.15	793.627	0.52
TOTAL (GLOBAL)	544.20	6056.716	8.99

*INCLUDING BERMUDA AND SAINT PIERRE AND MIQUELON

** INCLUDING GREENLAND

This table is based on statistics produced by NUA.com, up to and including January 2002, and population figures from the United Nations population database, based on 2000 estimates⁵.

User gender

In a 2001 survey, Internet statisticians Nielsen/NetRatings produced results that showed male users are currently dominating the Internet⁶. With the exception of Canada and the United States, men outnumber women online. The strong showing in North America may reflect the relatively long existence of Internet access in these countries and, more especially, the availability of the Internet in the home where women account for 52% of users⁷. Women have made inroads into the e-commerce sector in the US and Canada, with strong use of sites such as Amazon.com, but in other areas of the world there is still a long

way to go at all levels before Internet use measures up to the proportions expected along population lines⁸. However, global user demographic information is hard to come by due to the infancy of the Internet and the scale of the research involved, and this should be remembered when looking at any figures splitting Internet use along gender or age group lines.

Access points

Internet users log on in four locations: at home, at an educational establishment, at work or at a further location offering free or paid access such as a library or an Internet café. Home use is continuing to grow across North America, Europe and the Asia/Pacific region, and it is also increasing at a slower rate across the rest of the world. In Europe, for example, home Internet take up increased from 18% in March 2000 to 38% in

December 2001, although the European commission predicts this growth to be easing up a little⁹. In China, there are now 56.6 million home Internet users according to market researchers AC Nielsen, making China the country with the second highest number of home users after the US¹⁰. Compare these figures with South Africa, the most notably wired country in Africa, where only 6% of homes have Internet access and the evidence of a digital divide begins to grow¹¹.

Internet access at work is also growing. 19.6% of the US population, or 51.9 million people, use the Internet at work and in Europe the Internet is now present in 90% of European companies with ten employees or more¹². Access to the business potential of the Internet is not available to all however - in Uganda only a third of firms had a website up and running last year¹³. Unless the lack of online representation for developing world firms is addressed some economies are likely to be left behind over the coming years.

Libraries around the world, in their role as a further location for Internet access, continue to expand their computer facilities for public access. Initiatives such as the People's Network in the UK, which aims to have all public libraries connected to the Internet by 2005, are representative of continuing efforts by libraries to bring the Internet into the community¹⁴. In the US, a recent report suggests that 10% of total Internet users, often those with lower incomes, have connected to the web at the local library¹⁵. However, initiatives taken in the leading Internet countries of the

world should not blind us to the fact that many library services around the world are as yet unable to offer Internet access to their patrons.

Type of use

A recent study from the US, suggests that the Internet is beginning to be used for more varied activities than in previous years¹⁶. Over half of those surveyed use the Internet to check email and to keep in touch with friends and relatives. Following email use, the next most popular activity is to search for information, be it on products or services, personal interest, or government information. One third of users surveyed used the Internet for this activity or to check the news and sports reports. After these activities comes online shopping, followed by job searching and making phone calls.

We should not be too quick to take this survey as globally representative, but is fair to say that the first use of the Internet is email and communication, followed by information searching in its various guises. Incredibly popular over the last year has been the growth of file-sharing technology, which has led to users all over the world downloading music and video files, in the vast majority of cases illegally and free of charge, and swapping these files with each other over the Internet. Also growing, though perhaps slower than hoped for, is e-commerce.

Information searching, however, is increasing on the web. Whether this is information relating to

hobbies, financial information, travel arrangements or searching for old friends, the number of people online at work, in the home or in the library searching for information is increasing as people become more proficient and confident at finding what they want¹⁷.

Future developments

While current trends suggest that global Internet use will continue to grow, albeit at a slower rate than previously, we must think beyond this and assess the quality of this use¹⁸. Quality of access will become more and more important when considering freedom of access to information, and there are two factors to consider. First, those nations who lead the way in Internet access around the world - the US, the major European countries, some nations in the far east such as South Korea and Singapore - are committed to the installation of broadband networks that will facilitate faster Internet access. Take up of Broadband services is slow at present in Europe and the US (e.g. only 16% of US homes have broadband access, and only 1% in the UK¹⁹) but in Singapore, for example one in three Internet users have used broadband services, and the Asia/Pacific region accounts for 44% of broadband users worldwide²⁰.

These moves towards fast access further isolate African countries without even modem dial-up access. There is a real danger of a two-tier Internet springing into existence even as efforts are made to connect poorer and more remote

regions of the world. Those with broadband access stand on the verge of fast all-media information delivery while those without are left with a slow, dated service that cannot facilitate access to the types of content - video, audio - that will come to dominate the web in the near future.

We must also consider another factor that will affect the quality of information available on the Internet. Since the dot.com bubble burst at the end of the 1990s more online enterprises have been forced to return to the bottom line of showing a profit from their Internet activities. There are the stirrings of a growing trend towards payware over freeware. Online news services are beginning to find they have to charge for content, with the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times offering premium services in exchange for payment²¹. More intriguingly, especially in terms of the digital divide and access to information in less developed countries, the Times of London has declared it will be charging overseas users to access its site in future, and the BBC is considering doing the same²².

If, as the two trends outlined above suggest, we are moving towards a situation where the quality of access and quality of information available depend on a country or individual's ability to pay, then this has serious implications for freedom of access to information on the Internet. These economic restrictions on information access exacerbate conditions outlined above relating to governmental interference in citizens' Internet use, creating an atmosphere where the Informa-

tion superhighway effectively has several blocked lanes. Internet use may be increasing around the world, but this does not guarantee free, equal and unhampered access for all.

The digital divide

On the basis of the statistics discussed in this chapter, there is reason to state a strongly felt concern about the inequality in access to the Internet between developed and developing countries. The slower rate of the growth of Internet use is mainly due to the economic situation in the information poor countries underlining the overall difficulties with regards to lack of electricity supply and telephones lines - e.g. in Africa where only 0.5% of the population are online. Although the figures of Asia, Latin America and the Middle East are a little better, the difference between the rich and poor is sadly obvious and reflects the overall economic and infrastructural problems of the regions leaving the vast majority of the world's population far behind on the information highway.

The role of libraries as providers of Internet access seems at present almost impossible to fulfil. On top, many of the libraries that can provide Internet access may face difficulties regarding freedom of access to the information on the Internet of political, religious or other reasons. Though they share these problems with some developed countries as well, the fact remains that, while the rest of the world is discussing how best to develop and refine Internet use and provide broadband

services and file-sharing technology, the library and information communities in many countries in the regions in question do not have computers at all.

Information on the Internet is seldom communicated in the many languages and dialects represented in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Approximately, two-thirds²³ of the information available is in English and most of the rest is in European language, although content in some Asian languages is growing rapidly. Despite the growing usage of other languages, and early signs of the potential of the Internet to strengthen some languages by connecting virtual language communities, language barriers form a critical element of the digital divide.

In addition the growing proportion of information published only on the Internet is inaccessible to many people. Likewise, the expansion of the number of services which require payment increases not only the digital divide but also the information gap in general. Thus at the beginning of the century, it is questionable whether the Internet can be defined as the information tool of the 21st century for the majority of the world's population.

The problems concerning the digital divide are fundamentally economic and cannot be solved by the international library community alone. However, we can help keep the focus on the global role of libraries as providers of Internet accessible information. Thus the IFLA Internet

Manifesto is stating the principles regarding Internet, the IFLA/FAIFE PhD project will map the digital divide with regards to libraries and become an important information source on this topic, and future IFLA/FAIFE World Reports shall include specific information on Internet use in each country report.

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Libraries and Conflicts

Alex Byrne & Susanne Seidelin

Introduction

The world is continuously confronted with conflicts; some seem incidental, others have their roots way back in history. As a consequence human lives are at stake and human rights are violated. Conflicts affect people, and also libraries and librarians. Libraries continue to be damaged and destroyed, their collections purged and looted, and their staff dismissed, or even imprisoned and murdered. Clients are left without services or prohibited from using services. Together with other public institutions and private property, libraries are vulnerable to damage and destruction in times of conflict. While such damage obviously occurs during aerial or other bombardment and other military action, it can also occur through less dramatic but nonetheless serious means. In recent times they have included:

- Attacks by armed gangs of veterans (Zimbabwe)
- Attacks by military and para-military groups (East Timor)

- Attacks and damage by zealots (Afghanistan)
- ‘Cultural cleansing’ of staff and collections by library staff (Kosovo)
- Destruction of libraries (Bosnia and Croatia)
- Terrorist destruction of libraries (New York)
- Reported destruction of libraries (Afghanistan)
- Reported destruction of libraries and cultural heritage documents (Palestine - currently under the investigation of IFLA/FAIFE)

Such physical attacks on libraries are often accompanied by looting or purging of library collections, intimidation and worse of library staff members, threats against clients (or subgroups of clients). Sometimes these measures are taken without physical attack. The range of such threats is illustrated in the brief bibliography appended in the end of this chapter.

In 1996, IFLA collaborated with Unesco in the production of a record of the sorry history of such destruction in the twentieth century. At the end of that century and the beginning of the

present, the destruction continues. IFLA is involved in many ways, including:

Blue Shield

IFLA joined with the International Council on Archives, International Council of Museums and the International Council of Monuments and Sites to establish the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS - see <http://www.ifla.org/VI/4/admin/protect.htm>) in 1996.

ICBS aims to:

- Facilitate international responses to threats or emergencies threatening cultural property
- Encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property especially by promoting risk preparedness
- Train experts at national and regional level to prevent, control and recover from disasters
- Act in an advisory capacity for the protection of endangered heritage
- Consult and co-operate with other bodies including UNESCO, ICCROM and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Recognition in the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention, agreed in April 1999 by 84 countries, has given ICBS a new role, to advise the inter-governmental Committee for Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

CLM

The IFLA Committee on Legal and other Matters

(CLM) has decided that its main program at Glasgow should be on the Repatriation of Library Materials. The proposed program includes presentations on the concept of the repatriation of cultural materials and the current international legal framework for repatriation, a series of three case studies, which focus on library materials, and a concluding presentation on the role of IFLA.

IFLA/FAIFE

Threats to libraries and actions against them also come within the purview of IFLA/FAIFE through its mandate which is described in the Introduction to this Report.

IFLA/FAIFE's responsibilities extend beyond the threats and damage caused through armed conflict to those posed by governments and by extra-legal forces (as in Zimbabwe). However, a discussion of the different roles of IFLA and IFLA/FAIFE with regards to libraries and conflicts would be useful. When does FAIFE's engagement end and that of other elements of IFLA begin? FAIFE responds to violations and destruction. It undertakes preliminary investigations, raises matters with relevant authorities and informs colleagues in libraries and other organisations concerned with human rights and intellectual freedom. Other elements of IFLA such as PAC, Blue Shield and ALP take carriage as opportunities arise to address the consequences of the conflict and to advise on the reconstruction of libraries and information services. We need to develop an 'investigation and coordination' capacity within

IFLA/FAIFE to enable us to promptly respond to conflicts and to stimulate responses by international agencies, governments and private donors. This will need dedicated staff together with an income stream to support their activities.

PAC

One of the objectives the IFLA Core Programme for Preservation and Conservation (PAC) is to raise awareness of the principle that each country must accept responsibility for the preservation of its own imprints and for the preservation of the other archives and library materials of its own civilisation and culture.

Role of the international library community

Responding to an initiative of IFLA/FAIFE, the IFLA Governing Board noted in March 2002 the need to give special priority to the issues relating to 'libraries and conflicts'. This very encouraging step will raise the awareness of the international library community and focus on the importance of responding to the destruction of libraries following in the wake of conflicts and wars.

For the libraries immediately affected by a conflict, the loss of buildings, stock and cultural identity is obvious. They can no longer provide services or fulfil their cultural and educational role on local or national level. However, the loss of cultural heritage documents - or buildings - is one of the severe consequences that not only affect the

countries directly involved but the international community in general.

The question is, how can we actually help and through which channels? Although there are relevant international conventions relating to cultural property as well as the human rights to information and expression, we have not been well equipped to deal with the library related consequences of conflict.

For that reason - and as a starting point for the clarification - this IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report 2002 and the open session 'Libraries and conflicts' at the 2002 IFLA conference in Glasgow will discuss what the international library community can do to support library associations and their members to continue to provide access to information for all citizens, and which concrete approaches we could take with regards to conflicts, terrorist attacks and the destruction of cultural heritage.

The development of an IFLA action manual on how to respond to the destruction of libraries might be considered. The manual should outline the roles and involvement of IFLA and its various bodies, the cooperation with external partners and funding agencies, bearing in mind that IFLA does not have the necessary means to fund aid programmes. However, IFLA must consider how it could facilitate an approach by donors, including UNESCO, to addressing the effects of wars on the libraries of all affected countries. IFLA has a role in assessing needs and facilitating proactive approaches to the issue, at least through advocacy.

Recent destruction of libraries

Though libraries have been destroyed in countries all over the world eg in specific African countries such as Angola, Cape Verde, Rwanda, and DRC, to mention a few, this section will focus on the destruction of libraries in Afghanistan, Timor Loro'sae, and North Caucasus and Chechnya.

Afghanistan

Apart from our overall concern for the people of Afghanistan in the wake of recent and past conflicts, IFLA and IFLA/FAIFE are naturally concerned about the situation in the country with regards to intellectual freedom, library services and the whereabouts of our Afghan colleagues. Consequently, from mid December 2001 IFLA/FAIFE contacted a number of international bodies, partners and colleagues to gather as much information as possible right after the change of government. Contacts were made with organisations such as the American Library Association, Amnesty International, British Council, International Freedom of Expression Exchange, the Library Association of Pakistan, and the Mortenson Center for International Programs, Illinois USA, and UNESCO. Most of the organisations had little concrete information to offer, or plans of actions.

Mortenson Center project proposal

However, the Mortenson Center was investigating the possibilities of undertaking a library project

in Afghanistan in cooperation with two other partners. The status in May 2002 was that two project proposals have been developed, one of which is a short-term project that “would identify some civic and cultural leaders, including some librarians from around the country, to participate in a Libraries at the Heart of the Community program in the United States. The participants would spend 3-6 weeks in the United States at the University of Illinois and the Queens Borough Public Library learning to design, maintain, and promote libraries that support a civil society. During their stay, the participants would develop a strategic plan for the development of libraries in Afghanistan, with the assistance of a group of experts from the Mortenson Center, Queens Borough Public Library, and other organizations as appropriate”.

The other proposal is “based on the first idea, but more fully developed into a comprehensive, three-year project with three stages: Learning about community libraries; library development; and professional staff development”¹

Media Center for Afghanistan

At a later stage in the research IFLA/FAIFE contacted the Bertelsmann Foundation in Germany and learned of a ‘Media Center for Afghanistan’ project: “The Media Center for Afghanistan (MCA)², is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1993 through the joint efforts of Afghans and Germans residing in Germany, and seeks to engage its efforts and

resources for the future of education and grass-roots projects aimed at improving the livelihood of the Afghan population through: media collections, Afghan research projects, school projects and reconstruction. The MCA presently houses a large and extensive collection of literary and media works related to Afghanistan. The collection was built up to salvage the country's literary and academic works in the aftermath of the Soviet-Afghan war. The decade long struggle led to the destruction of the country's educational institutions and libraries. The MCA collection embraces diverse traditions of Afghanistan's intellectual and cultural heritage. Many of the literary contributions are from Afghan scientists, journalists, writers and artists. The MCA's original goal remains to eventually transfer the collection to a peaceful and stable environment inside the country. The collection is intended to serve the long-term educational needs of the Afghan populace and to provide them with the resources that would have otherwise been lost forever. The MCA has a library branch in Peshawar, Pakistan and in Jaji province of Paktia in Afghanistan. Highly qualified local employees and Afghan experts are tasked with purchasing rare Afghan books and media-related material for the library's archives. The MCA's Peshawar branch also serves as an important meeting and exchange forum for Afghan refugees interested in academic research on Afghanistan".

Currently, MCA are supporting some schools and Computer/English classes in Afghanistan as well as a small library in Peshawar. Furthermore, MCA

is developing a project establishing "community forums" with library, computer, and seminar facilities for Kabul and other places in order to provide freedom of access to information and the exchange of ideas.³

The Bertelsmann Foundation is continuously researching issues regarding Afghanistan.

Possible UNESCO and IFLA/FAIFE library project

In January 2002, the UNESCO Culture Sector/ Information Society Division approached IFLA on a joint library project in Afghanistan. IFLA/FAIFE was involved in developing the project proposal from the very beginning and based the proposal on the experiences of the IFLA/FAIFE Kosovo project.

Some 354 projects were prepared for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and at a head of agency meeting in Kabul on 14 February it was decided that over 300 should go forward, among which was the proposal on public, school and university libraries. From the UNESCO Culture Sector a total of 4-5 projects were submitted on libraries and media. The final list of approved projects for funding was expected to be published early March by a United Nations delegation and the government in Kabul.

On this basis, a UNESCO mission to the country was scheduled for mid March with participation of two IFLA/FAIFE experts. Unfortunately, there

has been little progress since then other than a slight re-formulation of the project made by UNESCO. By end of May 2002, many of the project proposals - including ours - are still awaiting the final approval and funding possibilities.

The IFLA/UNESCO proposal concerns the reconstruction of library services:⁴ 'Library Services in Afghanistan: The Rehabilitation of University, School and Public Libraries'

The project is based on the values and principles of the 'UNESCO/IFLA School Library Manifesto' and the 'Public Library Manifesto' and thus the values of free access to information and freedom of expression. The development and implementation of services in university, school and public libraries will support all education and literacy programmes and also the rural and urban illiteracy campaigns paying special attention to women's needs.

The project proposal contains, among other elements, of the following:

- 1 Legislation and administration programme
- 2 Mobile library service and mobile Internet access programme
- 3 Reconstruction programme
- 4 Book and reading programme
- 5 Information Technology programme
- 6 Professional training and development programme
- 7 Cultural heritage programme
- 8 Women, children and youth programme

- 9 Open access programme
- 10 Initiative Support Programme
- 11 Twinning Programme

Timor Loro'sae

Just after the IFLA Conference in Bangkok, the people of East Timor were subjected to violent attacks by militia supported by Indonesian military forces. In a well-planned attack many people were murdered, injured or raped. Public infrastructure including roads, bridges and schools were destroyed. That destruction included the small school libraries established by Indonesian educational authorities and the more substantial libraries of Universitas Timor Timur and the Dili Polytechnic.

Since then, the country has been stabilised and celebrated its inauguration as an independent nation, the first of the 21st Century, on May 20, 2002. It is a country of some 600,000 inhabitants who will need to educate their young, train their professionals, develop their infrastructure and celebrate their culture.

To achieve all of this they will need good libraries. The Xanana Gusmao Reading Room has been established but other libraries are in a parlous state. The best resourced at the time of writing is the Library of Universidad Nacional Timor Loro'sae. It is in a building, which has been reroofed with the assistance of USAID and has received textbooks funded by the Asia Foundation and other donations of books. Its staff members have been

assisted by volunteer librarians from Australia and it has received some donations of software and hardware. But its collections are tiny, its furniture is scanty and fragile, its building is not weatherproof (especially in the torrential rain of the tropical wet season), and its staff members desperately need training. Its needs are great but there has been little interest from international agencies.

Other libraries have received even less support. There is an urgent need to develop a model for a national library system and a plan for its development. IFLA/FAIFE is seeking to pursue this with the new government of the new nation.

North Caucasus and Chechnya

By E.Y. Genieva

The library is a place of public information, a specialized institution, the work of which is designed for the conditions of peacetime. The city of Grozny, capital of Chechnya, now lies in ruins. In the immediate area of conflict libraries are in a difficult situation. Before the military conflict, the Chechen Republic was one of the biggest research centers of the North Caucasus. The republic had unique library and archive funds, now destroyed by the war. National Tchekhov Library and the library of the Scientific and Research Institute of Humanities kept unique copies of books published in the North Caucasus in the end of the 19th /early 20th century. The Russian public has made a great effort to restore the library's funds. In particular, in February 2001

the Foundation of Humanitarian Assistance to the Chechen Republic organised a large-scale campaign in Moscow to collect scientific and fiction books for the restoration of the library funds in Chechnya. A list of those who contributed their books to the libraries in Chechnya includes more than 100 official institutions and individuals.

Of course a lot will be done thanks to such massive efforts. We should not forget, however, that today explosions are still heard in the North Caucasus. Hundreds of refugees from Chechnya find shelter in tent camps in the neighboring republics of Ingushetia and Daghestan. People are dying, and books are dying. How should libraries work in this situation? What kind of assistance can they offer in the conflict zone?

A broader view on access to information in the context of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights brings us to the question: how do people get information in conflict zones? The traditional information channels have been destroyed. The mass media practically does not exist; the existing media is engaged and not objective. Broadcast and electronic media - TV and Internet - are not available for the majority of the population. On the one hand, the society has no access to information; on the other, there is no objective information on the situation in the conflict zone. The conflict zone practically becomes an information enclave.

Currently in Chechnya there is a situation that may be defined as an information blockade

where the common information space, formed during peacetime, is under attack. Mechanisms need to be developed to influence this information space. One such mechanism, which may be facilitated by libraries, among other institutions, is contained in the Moltinsky's order No. 80 on the procedures for 'zachistka' ('clean-out' military operations). The fact this order exists demonstrates a huge positive move in providing the right to information in the conflict zones. The role of mass media in the conflict zones goes down. The role of libraries as open information sites considerably increases. Libraries become a key resource for guaranteeing the right to freedom of access to information. Parallel to the book collecting and compiling, another function of libraries comes to the fore - to become centers of civil activity, to attract socially active forces.

Libraries and refugees

On the territory of Ingushetia and Dagestan there are dozens of tent camps, where refugees have lived for a few years. Their movement on the territory of Chechnya and border areas is difficult. The corruption at the military block posts makes visits to libraries, usually located in the district centers, practically impossible for many people. Mobile libraries need to be created in the camps to support refugee camp schools. There are successful examples of such mobile libraries. Their compilation should be entrusted to an independent library network.

People's library

Traditionally a library is a resource for educated people. A person gets additional knowledge there. In the current and potential conflict zones libraries should serve another need - to become a center of public life. Libraries must become available for all; they should go beyond their premises and broaden their audience. This can be done through a library branch network.

Institute and school libraries

A more active participation of libraries in society should involve the institute libraries. Students in Grozny pass exams under bombs. Students in Grozny get killed. For a student in Grozny an institute is a way to run the blockade, to escape from the fighting in Chechnya and achieve a peaceful profession. It is an opportunity to serve Chechnya in peacetime. The library community should pay more attention to the institute libraries in Chechnya.

Giving libraries a status of social and civil centers means working for the future of the region. Libraries are the places to fight for the 'lost generation', for the young people who are forced to live and grow in the tent camps and ruined cities, without any information about the world.

What needs to be done?

Libraries in the conflict zones must be supplied with information, reflecting reaction in the world

to the situation in the regions. First of all they require periodicals, independent mass media and 'thick' magazines. It is important to combine Russian and foreign sources. It is essential to provide information about those who are not indifferent to the problems in Chechnya because Chechnya is not only part of Russia; it is also a part of the world. The libraries should also contain human rights literature. This also concerns smaller libraries, including the ones in the tent camps.

In our considerations we must not limit ourselves to the areas of direct conflict. The conflict in Chechnya is on much larger scale, and the number of participants and victims is enormous. One can say that 'we are all victims'. The local population supports the policy of Tkachev, Governor of the Krasnodar krai. To a great extent this is the result of information influencing the population, which becomes a passive consumer of one-sided opinions. The problem of manipulating various ethnic groups through information channels is very acute. The situation with the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia and Ingushetia is one illustration of the above, and unfortunately the list can be continued. The North Caucasus carries the burden of the totalitarian policy of Stalin's time when whole nations were resettled and their centuries-old traditions were destroyed. Inter-ethnic tension is easy to provoke. Libraries as centers of social life may become centers of peacekeeping efforts, through the organization of roundtables, exhibitions, and youth contests. Moreover these activities must be organized throughout the

North Caucasus. The best practices and models in this field have been developed by the North Caucasus libraries in cooperation with the Hot Spots Program of the Open Society Institute.

Information and conflicts

Let us recall how often books have burned in fire. And wherever we are - in the memorial place in Berlin where fascists burned the 'resisting' books, or in Chechnya where books burned in the fires of war - we must keep in mind that book burning is always an indication that the right to access to information and freedom of expression is being denied. Legally, freedom of access to information should have no geopolitical borders. It is equally important for all of us to remember this, whether this right is violated in Chechnya, Yugoslavia or by the totalitarian regimes in Central Asia, where - like in fascist Germany - books are burned and human rights activists are executed in the squares.

Freedom of access to the information of the world is universal and indivisible. Libraries play an important role, providing the integrity of the information space. In areas of conflicts especially, the role of libraries as human resources is very important as well. Libraries are created and developed by people who are deeply involved in culture striving to make the world better by the means of their profession. To help libraries in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Daghestan today means to make your contribution in the fight for the lost generation, whom we have no right to lose in the modern world.

Conclusion

This brief summary indicates the destruction experienced by libraries today in time of conflict whether that be civil war, militia action or international attacks. Coupled with campaigns of 'cultural cleansing' (as in Kosovo), neglect, favouritism and lack of vision, that destruction poses a tremendous challenge to the international library community. It is up to us to secure international attention to this issue and to seek wholehearted aid for the protection of libraries and information services in times of conflict and their reconstruction if damaged.

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Learning from History

‘Beacon for Freedom of Expression’

Hege Newth Nouri

“The history of literature is the history of censorship,” said the German novelist and Nobel Prize winner Günther Grass, in 2001. Most visible is the censorship inflicted on political, religious or moral grounds. In over 100 countries the right to freely express thoughts and opinions is still controlled by ruling authorities, in some countries more strictly than others. Authors, journalists, editors and publishers are the first victims of censorship. In that regard, 2001 was a sombre year, according to reports from international freedom of expression organisations. 31 journalists were killed, as in 2000, but the number of arrested journalists rose with 50 % to 489, the highest figure since 1995, and the number of attacks rose 40 % to 716.

Entering a new millennium with the aims of fostering a spirit of openness, exploring the field of knowledge and making it accessible, the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina will carry on the proud traditions of this once important library. It will become *the* world library for human rights and

humanism. In celebration of the revival of Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression (NFFE) (1995–2001) has developed an international database containing bibliographic information - historical and current - on censorship of books newspapers, and literature on freedom of expression. Since the autumn of 2001, the Norwegian Library Association, the Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oslo, and the Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science at the Oslo College have been the new proprietors of the database project, and constitute the Norwegian Steering Committee. In order to secure the continued development of the database, an international Steering Committee and administration was established in 2001. The Committee consists of representatives appointed by International Freedom of Expression Exchange Clearing House (IFEX), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (IFLA/FAIFE) and the Norwegian Steering Committee.

In this expert network of co-operation, the leadership of Bibliotheca Alexandrina have a key role to play. The database **Beacon for Freedom of Expression** has been funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture, representing a gift from Norway to be presented to Bibliotheca Alexandrina by the Norwegian Minister of Cultural and Church Affairs in 2002.

The basis for Beacon for Freedom of Expression is a worldwide survey conducted in 1997, aimed at mapping existing resources and determining the need for a bibliographical database on censorship and freedom of expression. The survey included Internet, national libraries, international non-governmental organisations, institutions for research and culture, government bodies and international institutions. The survey confirmed the need to gather in one database the vast selection of information on censorship past and present held by a great variety of sources. Of no less importance was to make available the huge amounts of information still only accessible in national paper archives.

Initially more than 300 national and international organisations and institutions were invited to participate in the database project. Based on the large network of contacts and sources, closer co-operation was established with selected national libraries on all continents. We, the proprietors, regard this co-operation as vitally important, not only to ensure the professional quality of information, but also to establish partnerships with those libraries that hold national archives on past

censorship. Amongst the libraries, which have contributed with material on censored publications, we wish to thank specially The National Library of Lithuania, the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg, the Russian State Library in Moscow, Jacobsens Publishers in South Africa and the National Library of South Africa. However, other libraries that do not keep information on censored publications, such as the British Library and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C, also represent invaluable contributors to the project, as their online catalogues represent the most comprehensive sources accessible of literature on freedom of expression and censorship.

An information bank on censorship and freedom of expression is needed

The proprietors' main objective has been to design a model, both regarding the content of the database and the co-operation between different fields of expertise. Accordingly, the Norwegian Steering Committee represents various professional fields, with the Norwegian National Library acting as the professional advisor. To ensure high professional technical quality and compatibility, the database was produced in collaboration with tutors and more than 20 students at the Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science at the Oslo University College.

Beacon for Freedom of Expression, updated through 2001, contains more than 50,000 items of bibliographic information on:

- Publications on freedom of expression from available sources worldwide. Publications include current reports and books, as well as publications out of print.
- Censorship of books and newspapers world wide during the last decade
- Bibliographical data on current and historic censorship of books and newspapers from selected historical periods and countries on all continents. Data on censored items before 1900 may remain incomplete. After 1900, sources allow for a considerably more comprehensive registration of data.

Thematically, NFFE has chosen as a first priority the most outstanding periods of censorship in Western history, such as that of the Roman Catholic Church, the former Soviet Union or Nazi Germany during World War II. These periods were selected due to their transnational reach and the duration of the devastation they caused.

The criteria of selection are based on the common definition of censorship, especially related to government and the rule of law. *The grounds for censorship* constitute a major criterion for the inclusion of bibliographic information of items in the database. Entries are restricted to those items that have been censored on political, religious or moral grounds. A second criterion is *the censoring body*. Only items censored by state or governing bodies or state related bodies are entered. Entries are made according to the definition of censorship in each country.

Censorship in libraries - the benevolent public concern for morality

Although government-instituted censorship had apparently been abandoned in most western countries during the 19th and most of the 20th century, public concern regarding offensive literature did not subside. Surprisingly, in liberal minded countries such as Sweden and Norway, boasting the earliest laws on press freedom, surveillance of public and school libraries remained a concern to authors and publishers even towards the end of the twentieth century. No less surprising is the die-hard tradition of surveillance of books in schools and libraries in the United States. In spite of the Library Bill of Rights and the library profession's interpretation of the First Amendment of the US Constitution, public and school libraries in the US are still subject to pressure from groups claiming to represent the interests of parents or religious moral codes, and face demands to remove books of "questionable content". However, this practice has not remained unchallenged by the libraries themselves. The American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom (ALAOIF) maintains statistics on attempts to censor libraries in various states, and regularly publishes lists of challenged books.

Censorship of libraries is far from a recent practice. On the contrary, libraries have been the targets of censorship since ancient times. History is littered with the destruction of library collections, and libraries themselves becoming flaming pyres on all continents, the deliberate burning of

a library recorded in China as early as in 221 BC. Although the destruction by fire of 400,000 rolls in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in 47 BC was by all accounts accidental, the burning of the entire collection of the University of Oxford library in 1683 was on direct orders from the king. Even in the 20th century, the burning and destruction of libraries has been extensively applied by ruling authorities as a warning to subversives and a method of purging ethnic languages, as was the case in Sarajevo and Kosova. In 1991 the Serbian government banned Albanian as a language of instruction at all levels of education. During the period 1990-99, all the libraries in Kosova were subjected to the burning or destruction of the Albanian-language collections, according to reports from the joint UNESCO, Council of Europe and IFLA/FAIFE Kosova Library Mission in 2000. The Serbian governments deliberate cultural ethnic cleansing on the brink of a new millennium will stand as a distressing monument to the enduring tradition of destructive censorship.

Our knowledge of the past, is our key to understanding the present

Beacon for Freedom of Expression is aimed at contributing to greater public awareness of the importance of a free press, access to information and open debate. We, the proprietors, believe that freedom of expression is the best defence against suppression. It represents the cornerstone of democracy.

The database Beacon for Freedom of Expression will simultaneously be launched as a dedicated website, and will be publicly available when the gift has been presented to the Library of Alexandria. Thus, the lists of banned literature will constitute a monument to the countless authors and journalists that throughout history have been silenced, their works in many cases now lost forever.

How to Respond when the Intellectual Freedoms are at Stake?

Robert Wallace Vaagan

Libraries and the new millennium

On the threshold of the new millennium it is tempting from the vantage point of a library and information science educator to conceive of the future in terms of challenges, and less in terms of potential conflict areas. Yet it would be naive to believe that issues such as globalisation, digitisation, digital literacy, the digital gap between the information rich and poor, commodification of information, privacy, authenticity, confidentiality, censorship, copyright, intellectual property rights, grey literature, electronic filters, the consequences of GATS (the General Agreement on Trade in Services) will be resolved without at least some level of conflict on certain issues. If we add to this list post-September 11, 2001, anti-terrorist legislation, which may negatively affect freedom of access to information and freedom of expression also for all of us who are not terrorists, there are definitely reasons for concern.

Reaffirmation of values and ethics

To many globalisation remains associated with something uncontrollable, which engulfs nations, institutions and individuals in an information and communication technologies-induced wave of transnational homogenisation. Librarianship and the entire library and information science field are being reshaped, to the extent that several library and information science authors such as M.Gorman and R. McCabe over the last years have reaffirmed the traditional values of librarianship.¹ Based on UNESCO's planned global infoethics code to be launched in 2003, and the increasing relevance of infoethics,² it is reasonable to posit that ethics will form part of the traffic rules that will apply to what some have described as the global information superhighway of the new millennium.³

Limitless freedom of expression?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Article 19, which forms a basis for the core values of IFLA and the activities of FAIFE, states that

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In the post-war atmosphere of 1948 when the UDHR was formulated, freedom of expression apparently had no downside. But in today's information age the controversy over the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) shows that unbridled freedom of expression for all also has a downside, and that many are willing to accept certain forms of media censorship. Both The American Library Association (ALA) and many privacy and free-speech organizations protested in vain against the Act, which was passed by the US Congress in December 2000. Earlier, in 1996, ALA had taken the Clinton Administration's Communications Decency Act (CDA) that attempted to introduce Internet filtering, to the courts, and in 1997 The Supreme Court ruled that most of the CDA was an "unconstitutional violation of free-speech rights"⁴

The idealistic principles of Article 19 have been modified in subsequent developments in international law and national legislatures. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) from 1966 was ratified by a large majority of states in the world and entered into force in 1976.⁵ Article 19 of the ICCPR concerns Freedom

of Opinion, Expression and Information. It repeats the UDHR formulations, and specifies that information and ideas can be oral, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of choice. Yet the exercise of these rights carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions such as respect of the rights and reputations of others, the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals.⁶

Similarly, in The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms from 1950, Article 10 (Freedom of expression) reads as follows:

- 1 Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
- 2 The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure

of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

Clearly, freedom of access to information and the freedom of expression remains an ideal, certainly an extremely important ideal, but which under certain conditions, e.g. times of crisis or war, can be legally proscribed. Whereas laws focus on what is legal, core values and codes of ethics primarily address the issue of legitimacy. Laws and ethics need not always harmonize, as civil disobedience is a reminder of. A potential conflict area, therefore, in the new millennium for libraries, librarians and information specialists is the possible divergence between professional ethical values such as unrestricted freedom of access to information and to freedom of expression, and aspects of existing or new legislation, especially new anti-terrorist legislation.

Libraries and the response to terrorism

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington, legislation was passed in the US and in many other countries designed to prevent international terrorism. While the intention is to restrain only those suspected of or proven to be linked with terrorist activities, there is concern also within the library and information science field that the consequences could reach much wider. If, as it has been suggested, some hijackers have communicated through Internet services at public libraries, should e.g. librarians and information specialists

be more alert to possible terrorist plotting, or even ordinary crime, among users and in consequence less adverse to waiving or violating user privacy and confidentiality? In a press release of October 4, 2001 (“Terrorism, the Internet, and Free Access to Information”) IFLA emphasized the positive side of freedom of access to information: the greatly increased use of Internet during and after the attacks by affected families, friends and the general public. On this basis IFLA urged the library community to redouble its efforts for freedom of access to information and freedom of expression worldwide. Yet national anti-terrorist legislation may in certain cases oblige the librarian and library to rescind on these high professional principles.

A related potential conflict area is library employee freedom of speech on professional and policy issues, which remains a moot point in most codes of ethics in the library and information science field. UCLA librarian J.Hargis received disciplinary action for criticizing the US administration in the immediate aftermath of September 11. The publication of a report entitled ‘Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It’ by ACTA (The American Council for Trustees and Alumni) have led to accusations from university employees of McCarthyism. It remains to be seen how libraries, librarians and information specialists in the US and in other countries will handle these potentially difficult topics. What is fairly obvious is that library and information science core values and ethics will be more in

focus than before. The reaffirmation of values and ethics referred to initially is therefore a phenomenon to which IFLA and FAIFE are devoting considerable attention.

IFLA/FAIFE and codes of ethics

2002 is not only the threshold to the new millennium and the challenges outlined above. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of IFLA and is therefore an appropriate occasion to reflect on the 5 core values that all IFLA member associations remain committed to, also after September 11, 2001:

- We believe that people, communities and organizations need for their physical, mental, democratic and economic well-being, free access to information, ideas and works of imagination
- We believe that the provision and delivery of high quality library and information services help guarantee that access
- We are committed to enabling library associations and institutions throughout the world, and their staff, to participate in the work of the Federation regardless of geographical location
- We support and promote the principles of freedom of access to information ideas and works of imagination embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- We recognize the rights of all members to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, ethnic origin, gender, language, political philosophy, race or religion.

The first IFLA/FAIFE World Report launched in 2001 confirmed a readiness to monitor the state of intellectual freedom within the global library community, to support IFLA policy development and cooperation with other international human rights organisations, and to respond to violations of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression.

The adoption by many library associations of codes of ethics or conduct is an important indication of the level of local commitment in different countries to the core values of IFLA and to the activities of FAIFE. Currently the FAIFE Website lists a selection of 27 countries with such codes, and the intention is to expand the list to include all countries with similar codes. None of these codes are identical and several, e.g. those for Thai Library Professionals (adopted 1978) and for Swedish librarians (adopted 1992, revised 1998), omit explicit references to electronic or digital information access and sources. National library association codes are a potentially important instrument for IFLA/FAIFE monitoring. Yet there is a need to know more about each national association code, e.g. the historical background, the library and information structure, library associations and the impact of the information age. With this in mind, IFLA in 2002 plans to publish in its Saur series a book entitled 'The Ethics of Librarianship: An International Survey', edited by Dr. Robert Vaagan with a foreword by Alex Byrne, chairman of FAIFE. The book will contain articles by 17 library practitioners, scholars and library and information science educators

from all over the world, and will address ethical challenges in librarianship in the information age. Hopefully, this type of book will prove helpful in promoting both IFLA core values and the work of FAIFE in monitoring the state of intellectual freedom within the global library community, and in supporting IFLA policy development and co-operation with other international human rights organisations.

In addition, the book may also facilitate a discussion of possible harmonization of national codes, to the extent that this is desirable and possible: While some variation in substance and detail in different national codes is natural as a result of separate historical, cultural and political contexts, the issue of code harmonization e.g. based on the 5 IFLA core values is clearly a field that is worth further exploration. Here IFLA/FAIFE would be prepared to establish a system of in-house consultancy services possibly reinforced by an international expert panel, which can be made available to members wishing to develop ethical guidelines, or have them independently assessed.

Ethical accountancy and auditing

In order to pursue the objectives noted above IFLA/FAIFE is considering several other concrete measures in addition to its policy papers and statements. Among these is the advocacy of a system of ethical accountancy and auditing in which members would be encouraged to introduce annual (alternatively bi-annual or tri-annual) ethical accountancy and audits. A possible strategy

would be that in countries with national ethical guidelines, each library would first assess the extent to which formulated ethical guidelines have been complied with, and further assess reasons for possible discrepancies between performance and guidelines. Secondly, national library associations would compile aggregate figures for all libraries in their respective countries. Thirdly, IFLA/FAIFE at the international level would compile an international index for all member associations. The system would be meaningful not only to countries and institutions operating in adherence with adopted ethical guidelines, but would represent a reference point also to other countries and institutions wanting to adopt similar guidelines. A parallel to this is the human development index of the UNDP, which has gathered considerable international attention and respect. The system could initially be tried out in some countries on a test basis, and if by common agreement proven successful, it could be spread to other countries. If IFLA/FAIFE were to implement this practice the material would provide invaluable background information for the functions and responsibilities already undertaken by IFLA/FAIFE, facilitate IFLA/FAIFE co-operation with free speech and human rights organizations and strengthen the position of IFLA/FAIFE internationally.

Library and information science education

Another field where there is further scope for strengthening the understanding of IFLA/FAIFE

core values and policy goals is library and information science education, which is currently undergoing reshaping in many countries. Some library and information science authors have observed that the theme of survival appears repeatedly in the library and information science education literature.⁷ Certainly, as noted by these authors, advances in technology and telecommunications and the increasing strategic importance of information have engendered a struggle between library and information science and other professions and academic disciplines. The struggle is both for jurisdiction over functions that have traditionally been library and information science turf, and for emerging information and communication technologies-induced information functions. While some authors recommend that librarians and libraries adopt new roles and acquire new skills, others urge the formation of new professional identities. Under pressure from commercialisation and privatisation, a loss of public-service ethic and the possibility of de-professionalization are noticeable also in librarianship. A new discourse around the profession supports privatisation of information and repackaging of the skills of the librarians into those of 'infopreneurs' (ibid.). But if we take the analysis a step further, we need to ask whether this is all that library and information science education is to be about? If intellectual freedom is at stake should not library and information science education take due note of this and adapt? One major conclusion we may draw from the books of Gorman and McCabe referred to above, is that ethical or moral values should be accorded a

stronger role in library and information science education. In Europe, it is interesting to note that in Denmark a recent study of 411 Danish public libraries shows that a clear majority of leaders of Danish public libraries do not have - and want to acquire - skills in VBL (Value-Based Leadership), such as ethical accounting.⁸

Presently there is considerable variation in the place and importance accorded to ethics in library and information science education. A fair supposition is that ethics is primarily taught in countries where ethical codes of librarianship have been adopted. Such is the case e.g. in Lithuania. By identifying and reflecting on ethical standards of excellence in areas such as dealing with information users, conducting professional relationships, and providing high-quality documentation and information services, librarianship ethics and infoethics essentially provide value-based landmarks and navigation skills in the agitated, globalized sea of the information age. As such these topics deserve to be compulsory in library and information science curricula, particularly in countries where national codes have been adopted. In this way young library and information science graduates commencing their careers will bring to the profession a heightened ethical awareness coupled by new skills which will make young library and information science professionals better equipped and motivated to meet the challenges of the new millennium, especially the threats to intellectual freedom.

Concrete responses to issues of concern

By Susanne Seidelin

When intellectual freedoms are at stake with regard to library services, IFLA and IFLA/FAIFE react in various ways according to the specific matter at hand. Cases in individual countries would often be addressed with letters to the authorities or governments, whereas published statements, declarations, or manifestos all address the more general difficulties and challenges the international library and information community are facing. In other cases, IFLA/FAIFE initiates projects related to specific countries or regions of concern, publishing reports on the results of investigations, eg the Kosovo Report and reports on library services in Cuba. The current focus on a possible project on the re-building and development of library services in Afghanistan in cooperation with UNESCO is another example of our activities. In 2001 we responded to reported cases in e.g. South Africa, Zimbabwe, East Timor, France, and currently we are investigating reports on the destruction of libraries and Arab cultural heritage documents in Palestine.

To verify and further investigate reported incidents, we cooperate closely with IFLA Headquarters, other IFLA bodies, library organisations and NGO's such as independent human rights organisations, or the organisations of the press. It should be stated here that IFLA/FAIFE does not take a political stand neither with regards to conflicts nor to reported incidents. We act solely

in the interest of promoting the principles of freedom of access to information as defined in our objectives. For the sake of our credibility this independent status is important to uphold. To further develop our professional approach, we are currently developing an alert manual that will identify the nature of the cases we respond to and which cases we would recommend directing to other organisations. The manual will, step by step, describe the working process of IFLA/FAIFE when responding to reported incidents, and will hopefully be published by end of this year.

As part of the celebration activities of the 75th anniversary of IFLA, IFLA/FAIFE last year suggested developing an IFLA declaration for the adoption by IFLA Council at the Glasgow conference. The draft version was approved by the Governing Board in March 2002 and translated into the official IFLA languages. The declaration proclaims its support for fundamental human rights and intellectual freedoms, including the right of freedom of access to information, and affirms the objectives of the library and information services connected herewith. It will be known as the Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom.

Another example of an IFLA/FAIFE initiative relating to IFLA policy development is the IFLA Internet Manifesto published on IFLANET on March 1, 2002⁹. As the Internet becomes more widely adopted as a major medium for communication and accessing information it becomes ever more important that we should ensure that it is

an open medium through which information, ideas and opinions may be freely expressed and sought. Thus the manifesto supports the principle of freedom of access to all Internet accessible information and rejects controls such as filtering. To implement the manifesto IFLA/FAIFE plans to hold workshops - if we can find sponsors willing to host the events. The workshops will address the challenges of implementation of principles and best practice guidelines in various regions of the world.

The decision of developing the manifesto was taken before September 11, 2001. In the wake of the terrible events of that day, so-called 'terrorist acts' have passed parliaments in several countries, underlining the relevance of this initiative. It is our hope and expectation that the Internet Manifesto will be as influential as the Public Library and the School Library Manifestos, which have been adopted previously by UNESCO.

To further the IFLA/FAIFE initiatives on issues regarding the Internet and bridging the digital divide, the PhD scholarship was initiated in November 2001. The project, taken on by Mr Stuart Hamilton of the UK, is focusing on freedom of access to Internet accessible information from a global perspective. Interim reports on the results shall be published regularly together with reports on meetings and workshops relevant to the studies of the topic.

These initiatives are examples of how the international library community, through IFLA, can

react collectively to help safeguard freedom of access to information for the sake of the worldwide development of libraries and professional services. Likewise, the manifestos and declarations also function as practical tools supporting the daily work in libraries around the world.

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