



IFLA Standing Committee Reference and Information Services (RISS)  
NEWSLETTER 2011

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**Report from RISS session 2011**

by Amanda Duffy

**Reference and Information Services Section**

**'Innovative Information Services in the Digital Environment'**

The Reference and Information Services Section Session in Puerto Rico drew an audience of over 260 delegates.

We are aware that Information Services must increase the pace at which they innovate to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of their users. The traditional function of a library of being the place where people come to get information and to learn will continue but it will no longer be constrained by physical boundaries.

During our Session we wanted to consider what this all meant and how we could achieve this move forward. But also in the midst of all this look at what didn't work – with possible ideas of why.

At the Conference session five presentations were held. The full papers are available on <http://conference.ifla.org/ifa77/programme-and-proceedings-day/2011-08-18-session-197>. Below are summaries of what our speakers had to say.

[Library Spaces and Reference Services](#) Keith Webster, University of Queensland, Australia

**Where are we today?**

Loans of books and reference enquiries in the university libraries are down but visits are up.

**What do students want when they visit the library?**

The order of priorities are use a computer, quiet study, meet friends, group work, find course materials, think, coffee and borrow books.

Students spend long periods in the Libraries. They appreciate comfort, and also an aesthetically pleasing environment, as well as one providing an appropriate study atmosphere.

The prime causes of frustration and irritation are around computer access and noise levels:

### **What about reference in all of this**

- People are not making the same numbers of enquiries
- We have made improvements to remove directional enquiries – better signs, iPod tours, online maps
- Traditional factual enquiries have been overtaken by Google and Wikipedia

In-depth enquiries were never managed well at the reference desk and are now done better

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### **Success or Failure of Digital Library Services - a decade of Danish experiences**

Jens Thorhauge, The Danish Agency for Libraries and Media

#### **The challenge: to become better in innovation management**

In our constant effort to develop libraries to meet the needs of citizens and exploit the digital technology in the most efficient way, are we sufficiently innovative and do we learn obvious lessons properly? Do we evaluate our successes and failures professionally?

Can we improve our success rate?

#### **The Danish example**

Danish Agency for Libraries and Media has supported many projects that should lead to new services. Some are successful and some are failures.

Can we extract some essential and general knowledge on what lead to successes and what caused failures?

#### **The difference between success and failure**

What makes the Literature Portal a hit with a growing number of users and contributors? While the Libraries Web Guide that we were convinced improved library services died away with very few users?

What constitutes the failure of subject portals like the art website 'Arkade' (nice services & cute collection BUT no users) or the highly sophisticated 'Bizigate' – a website on business economics. Enormous efforts were invested but very few users.

#### **Failures are easier to explain than successes**

In the wisdom of hindsight it is obvious that the subject portal was a concept born of collection management thinking.

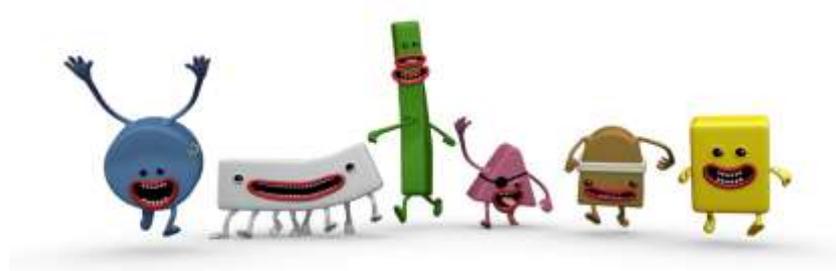
The portals were collections neatly organised like libraries on the web. Only problem: people did not use the web like a library, the search engines made the collection thinking obsolete from day 1. It took some time to realise this.

#### **What makes a success?**

- Knowledge of and interaction with users
- Idea and uniqueness

- Durability, modernity and willingness to change
- Professionalism
- Cooperation and partnerships
- Marketing and branding
- Business models – and national funding

### **An example of Success : the new children’s website**



### **Innovation in Changing Times: two new approaches to user services**

Harriet Lightman and Marianna Ryan - Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA

Northwestern University has approx. 19,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and the Library needed to educate students in the use and potential of the service.

#### The First Approach - Electronic Resources Forum (ERF)

- Audience: Over 200 incoming doctoral students in humanities and social sciences
- Objective: Introduce students to resources, people, spaces
- Program Elements: Half-day, most sessions taught by librarians with some faculty instructors
- Challenges:
  - Plan carefully: Be aware of budget expenditures
  - Tailor program to many different interests
  - Listen to the community – gather feedback **and** stay dynamic and fresh

#### The Second Approach - Explore Your Library Day (EYL)

- Unique way to engage students with library resources and staff
- Complementary program to ERF, but targeted to undergraduates
- Departure from other approaches: treasure hunts, games, mystery tours
- Learning without learning

Planning Elements involved asking questions such as What do undergrads need to know about the library? What will capture students' attention in the library? And How will students remember what they learned?

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### Innovative Information Services in the Digital Age

Wu Chunli and Hao Jinmin - National Library of China, Beijing

Pushing programs and knowledge services are potential sources of innovative reference work for the National Library of China.

#### **Push service modes for the long-distance readers**

- 1 Call center
- 2 By E-mail where the contents are "top 10 questions" and one of them is made into poster every month
- 3 Information pushes through mobile phones as guide to book borrowing and renewing, news from the homepage of NLC and readers comments and suggestions
- 4 FAQ through the web which is an effective way to transform passive services into active ones and is a good way of transforming the traditional service mode into more a individualized one.
- 5 Push service through the Virtue reference desk. Here it will help the library establish closer relations with its users. It is realized mainly through web forms and real-time reference.

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### Roving Reference with iPads: a study of the use of iPads as technological support and service assessment

Christine Brown and David Sulz - University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The University of Alberta Library comprises 2 large and complex buildings full of nooks and crannies (both physically and mentally). **The objectives of the pilot project were** to examine the value of face-to-face help to on-site patrons far from service desk and to evaluate iPad suitability for roving reference

#### **The Results**

**Patrons** : found it convenient & helpful (just-in-time, point-of-need)

- they liked being able to stay put (keep space, not move)
- appreciated sharing the screen, it was "cool"
- saw the library as techno-savvy
- can see staff helping others

**but** : had no print-outs and were following a staff-controlled process

- Felt unclear who could help and when service available

**Staff** : saw increased familiarity with patron activities & subject areas

iPad was portable  
able to explore new service tools & methods  
could gauge patron reactions

**but:** difficulties attracting volunteers and in scheduling

discomfort approaching patrons  
the iPad had fewer functions than desktop  
found some functions intuitive but not all

### **Conclusions**

There are advantages and disadvantages

- it was easy and cheap to “trial”
- who roves is important question
- when to rove - should it be random or consistent?
- you can overcome complexity with training & administrative commitment
- promotion & awareness of service and rovers vital

### **Last Tip**

Implement interactively - fail early, cheaply, often

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## **The new Standing Committee and it's members**

The IFLA Standing Committee for Reference and Information Services has experienced large changes in terms of members during 2011. The majority of the former committee members have completed their term and stepped aside to allow new members to take a place on the committee. There is a new chair, Judy Ng and new Secretary Jane Weller, plus many new members. The full list of Standing Committee members is available on the IFLA Web, <http://www.ifla.org/en/reference-and-information-services/standing-committee>

## **Introduction to a few of the Committee members**

A few of the new members were willing to share a little about themselves and their library plus their hopes and ambitions for this IFLA Standing Committee.

**Judy Ng .**

Chair, RISS Standing Committee.  
First term 2011-2015



With 25 years of experience in library work, I have worked in both the public and reference libraries. I am also involved in the development of reference services. I was involved in the set up both several public libraries as well as the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCRIL), which is the reference arm of the National Library Singapore. Currently, I am also overseeing the LKCRIL as well as the content and services of National Library Singapore. Over the last 3 years, I have led several initiatives to enhance the reference services at the National Library Singapore. One of them is the Network of Specialist project, whereby staff worked collaboratively to handle reference and research enquires. I was also involved in the development of several Singapore Content databases which are available online for reference eg. NewspaperSG (<http://newspapers.nl.sg>), an online resource for Singapore's newspaper content; Singapore Infopedia (<http://infopedia.nl.sg>), a free electronic resource on Singapore with a focus on the country's heritage and made up of a searchable collection of articles on topics that have helped to shape Singapore's history, culture and landscape. Recently, I was also responsible for the development of PictureSG (<http://pictures.nl.sg>) an online collection of images (photographs, artworks) aimed to educate the public on the socio-cultural & historical developments of Singapore.

I am honored to be the new Chair of the RISS and look forward to meeting up with members at the coming Mid-term Meeting in Stockholm.

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**Jane Weller .**

Secretary RISS Standing Committee.  
First term 2011-2015



I am currently working with Hampshire Libraries in the UK, a public library authority that is the 4th largest in England with a population of 1.2 million. It lies in the south of the country, and includes Winchester - the original capital of the country before London usurped the position! – which for example houses the burial place of Jane Austen in Winchester Cathedral.

It will be great to meet everyone either at the mid-term meeting in Stockholm, or in Helsinki in August, but I'm contactable on [jane.weller@hants.gov.uk](mailto:jane.weller@hants.gov.uk) or can do Skype Calls ([jane.weller4](https://www.skype.com/jane.weller4)) if you want to set one up.

Hampshire

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/library.htm> has 53 libraries ranging in size from the newest Discovery Centre at Basingstoke, to the really tiny such as Kingsclere Library, open 3 days a week for a few hours and sharing it's space with the local police station (one police constable on duty!) Since last year however we have undergone a series of unpleasant

restructures which has meant staff redundancies, unfilled vacancies and, on the horizon, probable library closures. My post of Reference & Information Manager/Special Collections Manager was abolished back in July, but I was offered voluntary redundancy which I accepted and so I leave Hampshire Libraries, after nearly 25 years, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

Prior to working here, I was 15 years with the Ministry of Defence, and served with all 3 Armed Forces – Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army as a civilian librarian attached to the Services. It was great fun and gave me the opportunity to work in Germany and Gibraltar and to return to Cyprus where I'd spent 6 years as a child with my family. So I have been, variously, a military history librarian/archivist; a medical librarian; and a public librarian specialising in Reference and E-Resources. Creating and promoting Hampshire's online services offer has been especially enjoyable and worthwhile in the last 5 years – see the results at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/library/reference-online.htm>

I'm thrilled to be part of the RISS Standing Committee, and my thanks again to Amanda Duffy for nominating me. We have worked together on the Information Services Group (CILIP,UK) where I am their web editor, and I shall retain that role as well as reporting back to ISG as the IFLA representative. My experiences of co-ordinating and attending conferences (as organiser or as a speaker) have included visits to Lithuania, Spain, Germany and France and all over the UK. In addition, because I helped my husband run a literary society for some 20 years, you can add Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Russia, Japan and Italy to the list! Our work with the Italians lead to both of us being made Cittadini Onorarii di Sesto Fiorentino – honorary citizens of Sesto F, which unsurprisingly is 6 km from Florence – and we feel very proud when wandering the streets of that amazing city to know we are "Not Tourists but Tuscans" !

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### **Lilianna Nalewajska.**

Standing Committee Member.

First term 2011-2015

I have been working in the University of Warsaw Library since February 2007. I finished studies in Archaeology and History of Art at the University of Warsaw.



I work in the Public Services Department in Information and Didactics Section. I am a member of the Polish Librarians' Association. My particular interests in library work are new solutions in information services and trainings concerning information literacy.

I participated in several conferences in Poland, giving speeches. In 2009 I attended the IFLA Congress in Milan.

Since the LLP Erasmus Program allows librarians to participate in exchange study visits I have visited the university libraries in Uppsala (Sweden), Pecs (Hungary), Glasgow (Scotland) and Helsinki (Finland). It gave me opportunities to make new acquaintances and to discuss and compare experiences in library work. It also gave me new ideas I have been implementing in my everyday work.

As a member of the IFLA RISS Committee I represent Polish librarians. I would like to share with them my experiences I learn during IFLA congresses and meetings but also I would like to show to IFLA members what my Polish colleagues suggest, their ideas or problems. That's why I am planning to ask my Polish colleagues what they expect from me to do as a member of the RISS Committee, what they would like me to tell you. Maybe it would be possible to organize in Poland an international

conference concerning reference and information services.

The University of Warsaw Library – in a nutshell

The University of Warsaw Library is one of three largest collections of scientific books in Poland. The Library has a long tradition – it was established in 1816. From the beginning it has been serving the academic community as well as offering its services and resources to general public. Nowadays the collection is over 3 million volumes including special collection items mostly of historical and artistic value. There are ca. 140 000 registered readers out of which half are not the University of Warsaw members. Since December 1999 the Library has been placed in a new building where free access to books has been arranged.

The Library provides a wide range of library, social and cultural services addressed to general public. Each year the Library hosts numerous cultural, social and artistic events. The national mission of the Library is also the maintenance and development of NUKAT union catalog built by the Library in cooperation with 83 research Polish libraries.

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### **Philippa Andreasson.**

Information Officer RISS Standing Committee.  
Second Term 2011-2015



Currently employed as Head of Department for Customer Services for Stockholm University library my responsibilities include teamwork staffing of the information desk, an Inter library loans group, a team of teaching librarians, and a team working with retrieval

from closed stacks. Prior to this role I worked at Kungliga biblioteket, National Library of Sweden with consortia licensing for electronic resources for academic and research libraries across Sweden. I began working in the information world in 1990 at McKinsey & Company, Inc Stockholm as an information specialist with online business information research. I relocated to Melbourne, Australia to study a Post Graduate in Information Services and Librarianship thereafter I secured a role as corporate librarian at Ericsson Australia Pty Ltd. I moved with Ericsson back to Sweden in 1998 and by 2004 was ready for change and found work at the National Library. Reference work and information services have been a key focus of many of my roles in the changing and challenging library world. I look forward to working with this IFLA section and wish to thank Ann-Sofie Oscarsson for my nomination. I hope to contribute with my time and experience to the Committee and look forward to learning from all the other members of the Committee.

Stockholm University Library is one of the largest research libraries in Sweden and one of the most visited cultural institutions in Stockholm, with about 1.8 million visitors every year.



Photo by Orasis Foto/Mia Åkermark

The university is a dynamic and challenging place to work and for those committee members who can attend the mid-term meeting in April 2012 you'll get to see much more of the place!

## Mid-term Meeting, Stockholm, 2012

All members of the Standing Committee are welcome to Stockholm, Sweden for the RISS Mid-term Meeting. The meeting will take place on the 2nd and 3rd of April 2012. One day will be hosted by Kungl. Biblioteket, National Library of Sweden and the other day hosted by Stockholm University Library. Amongst other matters the topics to be discussed at the meeting will be the finalisation of plans for the conference in Helsinki in June and initial preparations for the 2013 conference in Singapore. If you plan to attend please inform the Committees Chair, Judy Ng.



Photo by National Library of Sweden/Ulf Lundin

## Plans for Helsinki, IFLA 2012

Sara Gube Josefsson, Rania Shaarawy, Yongheng Zhong and Jane Weller from the Standing Committee have formed a Sub-group for the planning of the RISS Open Session at the IFLA WLIC in Helsinki, Finland in 2012.

The Section's Open Session is entitled, "***Generation Google Needs Us. New roles for visibility in the digital age for information & reference services***".

Main themes to be explored during the Session include:

- How to help patrons who don't know they need help? Reaching out to the digital generation
- Re-humanizing the Information service: are reference librarians the missing link? "
- Embedding information services in the digital age
- How do we transform our users' computer savvy into the ability to use and evaluate information efficiently, effectively, and ethically?
- What information skills will be needed in 2012 and beyond?
- How will the relationship and collaboration between librarians and users change?
- How do we transform and integrate reference and information literacy into new models of instruction and service?

### Interested in giving a paper?

Contact Jane Weller, Secretary, RISS, [jane.weller@hants.gov.uk](mailto:jane.weller@hants.gov.uk)

Please entitle your correspondence: IFLA RISS Papers.

## Thanks to the former committee

Finally a big thank you to the former RISS committee members shown here in Puerto Rico 2011.



Front row: Martin Kesselman (outgoing chair), Ann-Sofie Oscarsson, Petra van den Born, Amanda Duffy.

Back row: Zhong Yongheng (continuing member), Judy Ng (new chair), Elena Zhabko, Frank Kirkwood, Sara Gube-Josefsson (continuing member)