

What is IFLA?

IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) is the leading international body representing the interest of library and information services and their users. Established in 1927, IFLA was one of the first non-profit making, non-governmental organizations to further the cause of librarianship.

Its primary function is to promote international understanding, cooperation, discussion, research and development in all aspects of library activity, and to share its findings with the library community all over the world. Today IFLA is presented in more than 140 countries. Each year IFLA organizes an international conference, the *World Library and Information Congress*.

The objectives and professional activities of IFLA aim at universal application and comprehensive-ness. To facilitate its work the organization is structured in two types of units:

- eight Divisions with professional groups of Sections and Discussion Groups, organized by type of library or library activity;
- six Core Activities: Action for Development through Libraries Programme (ALP), Committee on Copyright and other Legal Matters (CLM), Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE), IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards (ICABS), Preservation and Conservation (PAC), and UNIMARC.

In pursuing its objectives, IFLA supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "everyone has the right to participate freely in the culture of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits".

IFLA Membership

Membership in IFLA is open to associations and institutions; affiliation is available for individuals. For further information on joining IFLA and registering for the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, contact:

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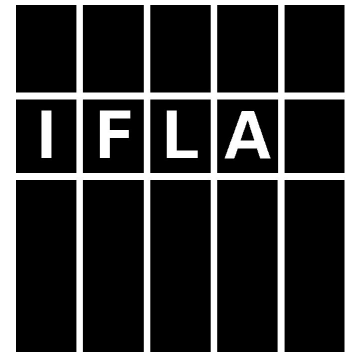
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Or take a look at the homepage of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section:

<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s18/index.htm>

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section



Rare Books and Manuscripts

Rare books and manuscripts are part of the global cultural heritage. Their significance as intellectual creations, historical items or objets d'art exceeds the boundaries of languages, states or periods. Scholars, librarians, book and art historians, bibliophiles and library users from all over the world read, study and admire them. Special Collections Departments in many libraries preserve these treasures with great care. They are the sources of history, the evidence that can be interrogated by each new generation asking their own questions. Through their papers and published writings, previous generations speak to us in their own voice.

Scope of the Section

The IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information, on matters of particular concern to rare book and manuscript librarians in all types of libraries, including the collection, preservation, digitization, bibliographic control, and use of such materials, and the management and marketing of Special Collections Departments.

The Section monitors developments and provides information to its members through a twice-yearly newsletter, programmes at IFLA Annual World Library and Information Congresses, and support of RBMS workshops. It also supports the progress of several projects. Currently 177 institutions and associations are members of the Section. Its business is conducted through a Standing Committee of up to 20 members from all over the world, who meet at IFLA General Conferences. The Section has a tradition of fruitful cooperation with the Section on Preservation and Conservation and the Section of Art Libraries.

General Goals of the Section

- Promote the understanding of the significance of rare books and manuscripts for scholarly research, and as part of the heritage of civilization, in an international context.
- Develop international standards in the field of rare book and manuscript librarianship, and publish directories and bibliographies which will assist rare book and manuscript librarians in their work.

Projects and plans

Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries (ABHB)

Under auspices of the Section a new volume of ABHB has been issued each year from 1970 on. The Dutch National Library is the General Editor. Since 2001 an electronic version, Book History Online, is available at www.kb.nl/bho.

Digitization activities

The section provides a forum for the exchange of experiences and expertise in digitization projects for rare books and manuscripts, especially with regard to standards and formats, selection, editorial control, access, users feedback, copy-right, preservation, funding and partnerships.

Guidelines for exhibition loans

In 2004 the Section published the brochure *Guidelines for Exhibition Loans*. It contains principles and best practices based on a recent survey of the loan policies of leading libraries in Europe and North America.

Inventory of international activities

An inventory of international organizations and projects in the field of Rare Books and Manuscripts is found on the Section's website.

Catalogue of Bookdealers' Catalogues

In many cases holdings of auctions and booksellers' catalogues are not indexed by libraries. Yet they contain very valuable information on the existence and international distribution of rare books and manuscripts.

Database of collections of manuscript fragments

Well-defined collections of fragments held in different parts of the world could usefully be brought together in a union listing, and possibly also via digitization of images.

Conferences

At the conference in Seoul in 2006 the Section organized a programme entitled: "West by East - East by West : Cultural and technological exchange - Old technology, new technology, collecting and describing rare materials." The Section's 2006 preconference in Hangzhou, China, focused on China's Written and Printed Cultural Heritage and Library Work. The Section's Durban meetings in 2007 were organized with the Preservation and Conservation Section on the theme "Dust, mould and integrated pest management in Heritage Collections".

Future conference sites

2008 Québec, Canada

2009 Milan, Italy

2010 Brisbane, Australia