



Division of Bibliographic Control Classification and Indexing Section

www.ifla.org/VII/s29/index.htm

Standing Committee (SC)

MINUTES of the Meetings

SC1: Saturday, 22 August 2009, 8.30-11.20, Room Yellow 2, Milan Convention Centre

SC2: Wednesday, 26 August 2009, 09.45-11.15, Room White 2, Milan City Convention Centre

75th IFLA General Conference and Council

World Library and Information Congress

Milan, Italy

SC1: Saturday, 22 August 2009

Present: Patrice Landry (chair), Jo-Anne Bélair, Thierry Bouchet, Françoise Bourdon, Leda Bultrini (secretary), Pino Buizza, Gordon Dunsire, Lynne Howarth, Yvonne Jahns, Anne-Céline Lambotte, Dorothy McGarry, David Miller, Sirje Nilbe, Edward O'Neill, Bernadette Patte, Sandra K. Roe, Eunice Maria Silva Pinto, Magdalena Svanberg, Thordis Thorarinsdóttir, Barbara Tillet, Maria Witt, Ekaterina Zaytseva, Maja Žumer

Apologies: Marie Balíková, Jonathan Furner

Absent: Ingebjørg Rype, Billie Hackney, Jagtar Singh

Observers: Julianne Beall, Tiina Ison, Joan S. Mitchell, Eeva Murtomaa, Federica Paradisi, Päivi Pekkarinen, Pat Riva, Miriam Säfström, Marcia Zeng.

1. Welcome and introductions

Patrice Landry welcomed all members and observers. He reminded the members that this is an election year, that there are many new members of the SC and that both old and new members can vote. The roster was sent around for updates. Members and observers introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Election of SC Chair and Secretary

Patrice Landry reminded the members of the SC of the rules and the procedures for the election. Patrice (end of second term as chair) and Leda Bultrini (end of second term in the SC) were not eligible at all to be nominated. Before starting the procedure for the election Leda Bultrini, on behalf of the SC, thanked Patrice Landry for the excellent job he did as Chair. Jo-Anne Bélair was elected Chair and Magdalena Svanberg was elected Secretary, both unanimously. No balloting process was necessary. Patrice informed the new officers about the leadership forum to be held on Sunday (12:15-13:30), that replaces the coordinating board meeting and is very important considering that the Classification and Indexing Section is now part of the big Division III, including many other Sections beyond the ones that composed the Division of Bibliographic Control.

4. Minutes of the Durban Meetings, 2007
The minutes were approved.

5. Financial report.
Patrice Landry reported that the Section had 3000 Euros dedicated to the project "Guidelines for subject access by national bibliographic agencies".

6. Report from the Division Coordinating Board
Patrice Landry was asked to remind everyone to always wear their IFLA badges to facilitate the work of the volunteers; he gave information about the way of printing papers when needed.
He reminded the SC that we should recommend papers for publication in *IFLA Journal* and in *ICBC*.

Ed O'Neill asked if it would be possible to recommend a paper presented at the Satellite meeting held in Florence, and Patrice answered that all those papers will be published in the *IFLA Publication Series*.

He reported about the reasons why the planned IFLA Conference in Brisbane had been relocated to Gothenburg, Sweden (the National Committee was not able to find sufficient financial sponsorship) and why Gothenburg, Sweden had been chosen instead of Malaysia to replace Brisbane (practical reasons linked to time constraints in regards to ensuring financial support).

A Working Group (WG) on future congresses was established by the IFLA Governing Board at its December 2008 meeting. The members of the WG are people involved in organizing previous conferences. Patrice is a member of the WG. They proposed 5 concepts to renew how to organize the future conferences: strategic planning (the area where the Conference will be held must be defined some years in advance); ownership (the Conference belongs to IFLA, which must have more control over everything); transparency; flexibility (for instance about the date); affordability. An advisory committee will work on this, considering that the year 2013 will be the end of the contract with Congrex.

Patrice also informed the SC members that new IFLA publications will be presented on Wednesday, 09.30-11.30.

He added that up to now, there have been 3200 registered participants in the Conference. The local organizers are hoping to reach the number of 3500 before the end of the Conference, which would be a good result, considering the international economic crisis.

- 7. Section Developments since the last meeting
 - 7.1 Planning of the Milan Conference (Discussed at 8)

- 7.2 Report of the WG on Guidelines for Multilingual Thesauri
Patrice reported that the work is finished and published in the *IFLA Professional Series*. The Guidelines attracted the attention of many people, especially those working on standards. He showed the participants in the meeting a printed copy of the Guidelines, that he would present in the Open Session of the Division IV Bibliographic Control to be held on Thursday 13:45-15:45.
He thanked all those who contributed to the Guidelines and to the revision process.
Patrice asked the SC to consider the possibility of creating a new WG to work on a new version of the Guidelines to expand and improve them.

- 7.3 Report of the WG on Guidelines for Subject Access by NBAs
Patrice apologized for not having been able to work very much as the chair of this WG because of his many commitments at work as well as chair of the Division. He added he still thinks that the work

should go on, especially in the context of the guidelines on digital bibliographies, and asked the members of the SC to volunteer to chair the WG. He reminded the members that there are funds (€ 3.000) for the project and that he has the results of the initial survey.

7.4 Report of the WG on Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Records (FRSAR)

Maja Žumer reported that the WG prepared the draft of the document (end of July), that received lots of comments, both from institutions and individuals. The WG will meet three times during the conference to examine the comments and work on the revision of the document. The first two meetings will be restricted to WG members. The new draft will circulate during the last months of 2009. The WG hopes that the document will be ready to be published in the first months of 2010.

7.5 Report on other actions undertaken by the Section in 2008/2009 (membership, liaison)
Nothing to report.

7.6 Section Newsletter

David Miller reported that two issues of the *Newsletter* were published in 2009 and thanked the contributors, adding that suggestions and advice for changes and innovations are welcomed. Patrice emphasized the improvement of the *Newsletter* in the last few years.

7.7 Report on the SC Satellite Meeting "Looking at the past and preparing for the future" (Florence, 20-21 August)

Patrice thanked the three chairs (Ed O'Neill, Anne-Céline Lambotte, and Leda Bultrini) and the local organizers. The chairs received a lot of papers, which was a clear sign of interest. Patrice suggested that eight years from one satellite meeting to another (the last one was in Dublin, Ohio in 2001) is too long, since the situation is changing so fast.

More than 50 people attended the meeting, which is a very good result, considering the economic crisis. The local support (venue, food and so on, and technical support) was very good. Leda added that the discussions at the end of each session were very interesting.

Gordon Dunsire and David Miller pointed out the possibility of organizing a satellite meeting in cooperation with other Sections, considering that in Florence the Classification and Indexing Section Satellite Meeting and Information Technology Section Satellite Meeting overlapped as to time and themes.

(10:00-10:15 Break)

8. Overview of the Milan Conference Programme

Françoise Bourdon coordinated the Milan Conference Programme "Foundation to build future subject access" (Thursday 27). Two papers will be presented "Introducing FRISAD and Mapping with SKOS and other models", prepared by Marcia Zeng (Kent State University, Kent, USA) and Maja Žumer (University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia), incoming member of the SC, and "Subject indexing in Italy: recent advances and future perspectives", by Anna Lucarelli, Federica Paradisi (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Florence, Italy) and Alberto Cheti (Research Group on Subject Indexing of the Italian Library (GRIS), Italy). Both papers have been posted on the Conference website accompanied by their translations in Arabic, French, German, Russian and Spanish. Françoise thanked all the colleagues in the SC who helped in the translations. Patrice congratulated Françoise on these exceptional results, stressing that IFLA recommends translating the papers into as many IFLA languages as possible.

He reminded the members that there will be simultaneous interpretation.

He added that in the open session he will promote the Section illustrating its activities and will present a short report of the satellite meeting that took place in Florence. He had asked SC members attending the satellite meeting to present the report but none of them volunteered.

Maja suggested trying to give the presenters a copy of the slides of the other presentations since they seem to appreciate this very much.

8.1 Open Forum of the Division

Patrice pointed out that it will be the last programme of Division IV – Bibliographic Control, which doesn't exist any more in the new IFLA structure.

The Session will introduce the work done on standards by three of the four Sections of the Division in the last years and that resulted in four publications on international cataloguing principles (presenter Barbara Tillett), on digital national bibliographies (presenter Maja Žumer), on the functional requirements for authority data (presenter Glenn Patton) and on multilingual thesauri (presenter Patrice Landry).

Barbara added that the accomplishment of the mission of publishing the IFLA *International Cataloguing Principles* will be acknowledged with a special celebration at the end of the Session.

Maja Žumer came back to the necessity of integrating the guidelines on national bibliographies in the digital environment with the development of the subject access issue.

Patrice said that the Social hour that the Division used to organize will be replaced this year by the celebration at the end of the Open Forum, because a day has been cut and so many meetings have been planned. It will be an end of an era, the end of Division IV.

If there is time, Patrice will stress the problem of the place of standards in the future of IFLA in the Division forum.

8.2 Open Programme of the Section

See 8.

9. WGs meeting times during this conference – WG chairs

Nothing to add.

9.1 Establishment of new working groups

Patrice reminded the members that the WG on multilingual thesauri has finished its work, but parts of the Guidelines should be improved and developed. Magdalena suggested that a new WG could be established, to work on this issue, but with a broader scope, including multilingual access in general. The SC decided to deal with this possibility on Wednesday, in the second meeting, and also to find a new name for the WG.

The SC members agreed that the WG on Guidelines for Subject Access by NBAs had to be renewed and that a chair was needed. Barbara Tillett and Maja Žumer stressed the need of subject access in national bibliographies, as stated also by the international cataloguing principles. Françoise Bourdon proposed a WG in cooperation with the Cataloguing and Bibliography Sections and Maja suggested including members coming from the WG on National Bibliographies in the Digital Age. Yvonne Jahns accepted to chair the WG and proposed that the members should meet during the Conference to plan the work. The SC agreed, and members interested in participating in the WG will meet during the Conference, getting together after the meeting and arranging when and where to meet.

No other working groups were proposed.

10. 2010 Gothenburg Conference Plans (Brisbane replacement) (Gothenburg, Sweden, August 2010).

11. 2011 San Juan, Puerto Rico Conference Plans

The items were deferred to Wednesday's meeting, when Patrice will communicate the theme of the Gothenburg Conference.

12. IFLA standards role in the new IFLA professional structure

Patrice reminded everyone that in the new IFLA organization there is no focus point for bibliographic control and standards. Elena Escolano (Cataloguing Section) circulated a document on that issue, which had already received comments by Barbara Tillett and Gordon Dunsire.

Three Sections of the former Division IV: Classification and Indexing, Cataloguing, and Bibliography, will discuss the document.

We should also remember that last year ICABS, which was our link with national libraries in terms of supporting bibliographic standards, switched its attention to the digital library, becoming ICADS, despite the repeated attempts by Patrice and Barbara to maintain the focus on standards for bibliographic control.

Patrice added that there is a possible link between this point and the future of the *ICBC*, which should advocate standards even more than before.

The three Sections of former Division IV should take the problem of standards very seriously; otherwise they will lose their ownership and control on this domain. They should be sure that their ownership is visible, that the standards are maintained, that they are coordinated, and so on, and the Sections should consider that the chair of the new Division III will probably have another agenda.

At the request of Patrice, Elena Escolano summarized the content of her document (attached to these minutes) to the members of the SC.

Patrice said that he would attend the meetings of the Cataloguing and Bibliography Sections and would ask them to come up with some ideas that could be implemented in the following months, also about a bibliographic control corner on the web. A structure must be created to bind together the three Sections that work on standards.

Patrice said that a WG will be convened, probably by the Chair of Division III, with the goal of submitting a report at the April 2010 Professional Committee meeting. Patrice will bring this issue up with IFLA Hq. and the Chair of Division III in September. The PC decision and report will also be brought up at the ICADS Advisory meeting next August by Patrice as Chair of the PC and members of this advisory group in order to bring the issue of bibliographic standards to the attention of national libraries."

He added that he strongly believes that *ICBC* should continue with the IFLA logo and continue to promote bibliographic control. At the same time we should make the work of Marie-France Plassard easier. A way to do this could be to create an editorial board, whose members would have clear responsibilities.

Leda proposed to form alliances with other Sections more "in vogue" such as IT and KM to put the theme of standards on a common agenda.

Patrice added that we should find a way to make some alliances stable.

Françoise Bourdon pointed out that within the previous IFLA structure, some WGs were cross-section WGs and the standards and the guidelines produced by the WGs were approved at the Division level and there was an official list of people to contact. Now nobody knows how the procedures should work. There is a real risk of losing important parts of professional impact.

Patrice stressed the namespace issue that was raised last summer. Gordon and Pat Riva worked hard on that; they made a presentation to IFLA Headquarters and the work is still ongoing, and we should confirm the brand and the ownership on this.

Gordon insisted that there is no place on the IFLANET where the standards and the discussion documents that pertain to bibliographic control are collected and clearly visible. The bibliographic control corner that Patrice proposed must be officially accepted and organized and because of the way IFLANET is managed, to obtain this result is very difficult since many other groups and individuals must be involved, but it must be achieved.

Patrice said that we should insist that the activity on standards is recognized as a sort of core activity and Barbara added that a core activity means the attention of IFLA and also funding.

Lynne Howarth said that in the digital library age standards are more and more important, and it's very important to assure the visibility and the clearness of the ownership of those documents for external bodies that use IFLA standards and other similar documents.. For those using its standards IFLA is something similar to ISO. We should prepare a strategic document on this.

Gordon Dunsire proposed to establish a WG including members from the four Sections of the former Division IV and members from the Information Technology Section to confront this issue.

Patrice said that in the following days the Sections should plan to prepare a document in time to present it to the Professional Committee in December, or, if more time is needed, for the April meeting.

Françoise Bourdon said that another point to put on the agenda of this WG is the recommendation that these kind of documents should all be downloadable free of charge from the web immediately after their publication.

Patrice added that when attending the other SCs meetings of the former Division IV he would ask the members to participate in this WG and asked the members of the Classification and Indexing Section Standing Committee to consider who wants to be a member of the WG.

13. *ICBC* journal – future of this publication

Patrice invited members to participate in a meeting he has set up on Monday, August 24, 12:15-13:15 in room White 1 to discuss the future of this publication or to communicate to him some ideas for a possible future of the journal, if they can not attend.

Last year he had been given the mandate by Sjoerd Koopman to prepare a report on the possible solutions to the subscription and financial problems that the journal is facing.

The alternative possibilities are:

- To keep publishing the *ICBC* journal as a printed publication but with a new editorial content
- To publish it as an e-journal, with changes in the editorial content
- To cease the publication.

14. Section's Strategic Plan (2009-2011)

The item was deferred to Wednesday's meeting.

Patrice presented IFLA certificates of attendance to the retiring members.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20

SC2: Wednesday, 26 August 2009

Present: Patrice Landry (outgoing Chair), Marie Balíková, Jo-Anne Bélair (incoming Chair)
Thierry Bouchet, Leda Bultrini (outgoing Secretary), Pino Buizza, Gordon Dunsire,
Lynne Howarth, Yvonne Jahns, Anne-Céline Lambotte, Dorothy McGarry, David
Miller, Sirje Nilbe, Edward O'Neill, Bernadette Patte, Sandra K. Roe, Eunice Maria
Silva Pinto, Magdalena Svanberg (incoming Secretary), Thordis Thorarinsdóttir,
Barbara Tillett, Maria Witt, Ekaterina Zaytseva, Maja Žumer

Apologies: Jonathan Furner

Absent: Françoise Bourdon, Billie Hackney, Ingebjørg Rype, Jagtar Singh

Observers: Harriet Aagaard, Julianne Beall, Bodil Gustavsson, Massimo Gentili-Tedeschi, Judy
Kuhagen, Ia McIlwaine, Tania Merðun, Jan Pisanski, Pat Riva, Miriam Sáfström, Luisa
Venuti.

Patrice wished everyone welcome to the meeting, which was a transition meeting between outgoing and incoming IFLA Section SC members. Jo-Anne would chair the meeting, supported by Patrice, and Magdalena would write the minutes from this second meeting, supported by Leda.

9.1 Establishment of new working groups

Jo-Anne asked for proposals of new WGs.

The WG on Guidelines for Subject Access by NBAs is not totally new, but newly established with Yvonne as the new chair. Yvonne reported on the plans of the WG. The group will build on work already done, i.e., the questionnaire made by Françoise and Patrice and the guidelines published by the Bibliography Section. This questionnaire will be distributed to the members of the Classification and Indexing and Bibliography Sections. Yvonne asked all NBAs among the members of the SC to submit their answers and to recruit other NBAs to answer. She will send out a reminder on this.

At the first meeting there was a discussion on a continuation of the WG on Guidelines for Multilingual Thesauri, possibly with a broader scope to cover multilingual access in general. Yvonne supported this proposal. She reported on contacts with the Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section, which was interested in cooperation on this. Contacts will be made by Jo-Anne and Magdalena during this year, but a WG will not be set up until next year's SC meeting.

Gordon proposed a new cross-sectional WG/ task group on Namespaces, UNIMARC, RDA, and the FRBR Review Group. More details are found in Gordon's paper (attached). The Classification and Indexing Section will initiate the WG and invite the Cataloguing Section, the IT Section, the Bibliography Section, and the Knowledge Management Section. All Sections working on international standards of this kind should be involved. Gordon will send a proposal to Jo-Anne, who will submit it to the Professional Committee. It should be submitted in time for the December or the April Professional Committee meeting. Gordon and Patrice will inform the other Sections on what is going on at meetings. Barbara and Lynne expressed interest in participating, and Leda hoped she could function as the member from the Knowledge Management Section. Practical questions, such as the number of members in the group, need to be solved. It was noted that the Cataloging Section is responsible for several standards.

10. 2010 Gothenburg Conference Plans (Gothenburg, Sweden, August 2010)

A committee was set up to organize the open session of the Section. Lynne Howarth, Sirje Nilbe, and Eunice Maria Silva Pinto volunteered. The committee will suggest themes to the SC. The overall theme of the Gothenburg conference is "Open access to knowledge - promoting sustainable progress" and some possible themes were mentioned and discussed at the meeting:

- interoperability in subject access
- the impact of SKOS (Simple Knowledge Organization System) on subject access
- freely available subject data.

There will probably be an open call for papers, since this format worked well for the satellite meeting, but there can also be one selected paper. The importance of encouraging participation from areas and countries not represented in the SC was stressed.

The possibilities of cooperation with other Sections were discussed. Magdalena pointed out that participants in the Florence satellite meetings expressed interest in a joint meeting on the Semantic web, since there was a big overlap in the themes of the Classification & Indexing meeting and the IT meeting. Possible cooperation partners include the Information Technology Section and the Knowledge Management Section. Cooperation gives no extra slot, but cooperation would give the possibility for a four or six hour session. Concerns on six hour sessions were expressed, four hours were judged to be the maximum length preferable. Off-site sessions should be avoided.

Future satellite meetings were also discussed. Everyone agreed on trying to organize satellite meetings more often than every eighth year, but no meeting is planned for 2010. In 2011, there might be a problem to organize a meeting without a local contact in Puerto Rico. A satellite meeting in Helsinki in 2012 seems like a realistic goal. The possibilities to arrange a joint satellite meeting with another Section should be explored, and a joint meeting might be arranged earlier according to the plans of the Section we cooperate with. Leda suggested that a satellite meeting could be a follow up of the theme of the open sessions. Patrice mentioned a theme of the Digital Library Futures Session that could be an idea for future conferences: how far do we go in letting the user in? How do we combine the use of standards with the participation of the user?

11. 2011 San Juan, Puerto Rico Conference Plans

The plans for the San Juan conference will be discussed next year. The theme of the conference is "Libraries beyond libraries: Integration, Innovation and Information for all".

12.-13. See the first SC meeting

14. Section's Strategic Plan (2009-2011)

The strategic plan does not need to be discussed and changed at this stage, only maintained and updated. Magdalena will add information from today's meeting to the plan, and then send it out for approval.

15. Discussion / Evaluation of Milan Conference

Since the second SC meeting precedes the open programme of both the Section and Division, there will be a post-conference evaluation by e-mail. Jo-Anne will distribute some questions to consider. About 200 people attended the open session of the Section. The identification of the Section's candidate paper for publication in *IFLA Journal* will also be done by e-mail.

The overall organization of the conference was discussed. Positive aspects: good food, helpful volunteers, great cultural events. Negative aspects: lack of tables, water, power supply for laptops in the meeting rooms, only expensive wifi for the first half of the conference. Better social areas and flexible solutions to make it easy to set up spontaneous meetings were other requests.

The organization of the SC meeting was also discussed. Jo-Anne wants the practical aspects of the conference to begin at the same time as the SC meetings. This year was the first time that the second SC meeting was set up parallel to the open sessions. Maja thought that this was negative since it limited the time that could be used to attend the open sessions or for other meetings. It might also make it more difficult for observers to attend. Patrice reminded us that we are also free to set up meetings at any time we want, i.e., after the conference. Maja remarked that this also would make it more difficult for observers to attend. Jo-Anne will include a question on the scheduling of the second SC meeting in her conference evaluation mail.

16. No IFLA matters to report not reported elsewhere

17. Survey on standards used in creating bibliographic, authority, and holdings records

Patrice presented a proposal from Judy Kuhagen, Cataloguing Section. The proposal is to exclude information on "national cataloguing standard" from *Name of persons: national usages for entry in catalogues*. Instead, the Cataloguing Section and the Classification and Indexing Section jointly should develop a survey asking countries to report all the standards used in creating bibliographic, authority, and holdings records. The survey results would be posted on IFLANET, where the information could easily be shared and updated. Among the categories of standards that could be included in the survey are subject and genre/form vocabularies and classification schema. Judy will send the proposal to Jo-

Anne. SC members representing countries where Judy does not already have a contact person will be asked to answer the survey.

18. Unfinished business or updates from the first meeting
IFLA standards role in the new IFLA professional structure

There is a discussion going on about standards as a core activity of IFLA. The Section will propose a WG to recommend how IFLA should focus on bibliographic standards (e.g., re-establish a core activity). The task will be to recommend a structure to coordinate, maintain, and promote standards within IFLA. The recommendation should be submitted to the PC before its April meeting. The WG should include members from all bibliographic Sections. A call for volunteers should be made.

ICBC journal – future of this publication

Patrice reported from the meeting on the future of *ICBC*. The meeting participants would like the journal to become peer reviewed and function both as a scholarly journal and a bulletin. The questions on payment and e-journal/print need to be explored further. The outcome of the meeting is that a proposal should be made to the PC to set up a WG, including members from involved Sections. The task of the WG should be to investigate the future of *ICBC*. The current model of *ICBC* is proposed to be kept for one year, until the restructuring is done. The group could be organized as a project and get funds from IFLA. Patrice will send out a document to the chair for distribution among the members of the SC.

MulDiCat

Barbara reported on the MulDiCat project (Multilingual Dictionary of Cataloguing Terms and Concepts). The old MulDiCat database, 22 translations from the International Cataloguing Principles Glossary, are now included with plans to add other standards and vocabularies. There are plans for a database, and a meeting is set up during the conference with the IFLA Web master. Barbara will make an announcement when the new MulDiCat is available on the IFLA Web site.

Patrice handed out certificates of appreciation to retiring members not present at this year's first SC meeting. The SC committee members thanked Patrice and Leda for their excellent work in the SC.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned and pictures of the Standing Committee were taken.

Appendix to Item 12, IFLA standards role in the new IFLA professional structure

Discussion papers by Elena Escolano and Gordon Dunsire, 4 August 2009

Comments offered by Barbara Tillett, 5 August 2009 (shown in red)

The IFLA Statutes 2008 retain its role as a standards developer and promoter as a primary means to fulfil its purpose (article 2.2.1 <http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/ifla-statutes-en.pdf>) and among the core values for which IFLA pursues its purpose is "universal and equitable access to information". This is also the *raison d'être* of the Cataloguing Section.

But this is not accompanied by corresponding action.

In 2003 ICABS was created as the IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards to continue and expand the coordination work formerly done by the IFLA UBCIM (Universal Bibliographic Control and International Marc) and UDT (Universal Dataflow and Telecommunications) Core Programme offices.

This was a result of the Deutsche Bibliothek (now Deutsche Nationalbibliothek) no longer funding a UBCIM office (Universal Bibliographic Control/International MARC). In order to cover some of the support that office provided, several of the national libraries in CDNL agreed to join forces to continue support, and formed ICABS. There was no communication with the Cataloguing Section about this change until it was a fait accompli. ICABS was not exactly within the IFLA umbrella, and several meetings were held with the Governing Board/Professional Committee to clarify the relationship). However, in order to make the best of the situation, specific liaison roles were made between ICABS and ongoing Cataloguing Section activities, namely ISBD support (from the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek) and the FRBR/FRAD support (from the British Library). Budget requests were

submitted each year to continue funding the respective review groups and working group. IFLA also entertained budget requests, and eventually ICABS made it clear they felt it was more appropriate to request funds from IFLA than directly from ICABS.

It should be noted that the IM part of UBCIM for UNIMARC was carried on through the financial support of the National Library of Portugal.

The UBC system existed from 1970, formally following the International Meeting of Cataloguing Experts held in Copenhagen in 1969 at which was established the basis for creating a system for the international exchange of information.

The rationale of UBC was very well explained by the director of the IFLA International Office for UBC, Dorothy Anderson, in 1974, which in spite of the passage of time is still relevant: "In a world which is unevenly composed of over-privileged and under-privileged countries, where economic resources rest unequally and what in one country seems commonplace – computers, typewriters, copying machines – in another may seem a far distant and impossible dream, yet the objective of international standards rests firm with or without computers. All countries can participate as the component parts of a world wide UBC system if their contribution follows patterns and standards that are universal; and equally can receive." This is very consistent with the purpose of IFLA.

This world view from the 1970's was challenged in the 1990's as the work of the FSCH group and subsequently also the MLAR, GARR, and FRBR/FRAD groups realized the importance of enabling cultural and language/script variations to best meet local user needs, so a new view of UBC emerged (Ton Heiligers, et al.) whereby standards were stated with the understanding that the specific language/script used, would meet local needs. This carried through to the work of the IME ICC, where from the first regional meeting, the importance of keeping the user foremost in mind was reaffirmed. The proposals from the FSCH, MLAR, GARR, and ICP, and FRAD continued to make it clear that a new view of UBC had emerged within IFLA, where the cultural variations were respected while still maintaining standards and linking data for global sharing (as eventually emerged with the Virtual International Authority File concept).

The effectiveness of the UBC system was dependent on the maximum standardization of bibliographic description. The main goal was to offer consistency when sharing bibliographic information. In the promulgation of the UBC program three international organizations played a major part: IFLA; the UNESCO General Information Program (PGI); and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The international office for UBC was created, and it gave support at a variety of levels to projects directed towards its development. In so doing it provided support to IFLA working groups and to experts engaged in particular bibliographic projects.

As noted above, a new view of UBC emerged in the 1990's, that reaffirmed the importance of standards but not requiring everyone worldwide to use the same form of headings/access points and recognizing that new metadata structures are emerging. The support in IFLA for UBCIM was completely dependent on the funds from the Deutsche Bibliothek, which no longer is willing to fund it. Can another source for funding be found?

The announcement of the change from ICABS to ICADS was made last year during the IFLA General Conference in Quebec, 2008. At its presentation some questions arose about what was going to happen with the IFLA standards and no clear response was made. At present, with the information that is in its website, and the letter of response to a direct question which is copied below, it can clearly be deduced that the bibliographic standards have lost the full support they used to receive in the past from the UBC program: the emphasis is on their application to digital libraries as a component.

This change reflects the changing interests of the supporting national libraries and is somewhat apart from IFLA, as noted above. Many attempts were made at the Professional Committee and Governing Board levels during the course of these changes to reaffirm the essential importance of bibliographic standards to IFLA's long-term mission. With the restructuring of IFLA and change in core activities, it has been a most frustrating experience to observe the abandonment of the bibliographic control aspects as a core activity for the organization (loss of the Division on Bibliographic Control and loss of the UBC/IM core activity). It will take ongoing diligence of the respective Sections (Bibliography, Cataloguing, and Classification & Indexing) to speak up for funding and to continue through their good actions to keep bibliographic control at the forefront of IFLA accomplishments. Even more, it would be

important to gain the support of the Governing Board and some third party funding agency to turn around the past decisions that abandoned UBCIM and to start anew with the new view of UBC.

ICADS response of June 17th,2009:

“The relationship between ICADS and the Cataloguing Section would be a less direct one under the new focus for ICADS, compared to the former focus for ICABS. The ICADS focus is on digital library strategy and development, so while metadata developments will obviously be a component of that it is not the sole focus of the work.

As each of the ICADS national library members also separately funds additional core activities for IFLA, the Advisory Committee last year felt that they would rather have core bibliographic standards activities funded through that route rather than requests being made in addition to ICADS. We would not expect therefore to routinely fund core bibliographic standards work. However, where there is an overlap between IFLA work on digital metadata and the focus of ICADS, there may be opportunities for joint development or collaborative working. The work of ICADS is done as 'contribution in kind' i.e. the libraries do work on behalf of ICADS themselves, rather than paying money into a central fund to pay others to do it. There is therefore no central fund to which we can bid. It would be up to each individual member library to decide depending on the relevance of the work to its own plans and that of ICADS as a whole.

There is, of course, the possibility for libraries who have member representatives on Section Committees to consider funding special activities which they consider essential but which cannot get agreement from IFLA or from another route for funding or support. However, that would be up to the individual representative and their library management and not an issue for ICADS as a group.

I hope this is useful. Please let me know if any of this is unclear or if you would like to discuss further.

With best wishes

Caroline Brazier
Associate Director Operations and Services, The British Library”

Nowadays UNIMARC has its own Core Activity but what happens with the rest of the standards, models, guidelines, etc. from the Cataloguing Section?

UNIMARC has its own, because the National Library of Portugal stepped up to fund it and provide staff.

On the IFLA website information about the Profession Pillar, one of the three Pillars of IFLA, focuses on “long established Core Activities”, where ALP, ICADS, PAC, UNIMARC are mentioned. It is true it adds “and Sections and Divisions” (<http://www.ifla.org/en/three-pillars>) but it would be more helpful if the long established UBC is mentioned.

Bibliographic control is seen as one of the pillars. The listing of those core activities identifies those present at the time of the writing of that document and reflects the reality of the loss of funding for the UBCIM office.

Because of this lack of consideration by IFLA, it is not surprising to find that some of its important standards were not fully considered during important initiatives such as the RDA-ONIX working group meetings which have much influenced subsequent developments; or wouldn't have been considered in an important project for mapping standards for a semantic web Vocabulary Mapping Framework (VMF)Project (see <http://cdlr.strath.ac.uk/VMF> and the project announcement at http://www.doi.org/news/VMF_project_announcement_090615.pdf). The standards formally included are: CIDOC CRM; DCMI; DDEX; DOI; FRBR; MARC21; LOM; ONIX; RDA.

IFLA groups can ask to be part of any of those groups – as was done for example with the harmonization meetings of ISBD, ISSN, and AACR2 for serials/continuing resources in the 1990's. The Cataloguing Section has a long history of engaging in liaison work with outside organizations, such as ICA and the CIDOC/CRM work with FRBR. The Section might ask to be involved with VMF in a similar manner.

This is difficult to understand, if the intention is to research the interoperability of standards, when it is a fact that the IFLA standards are accepted and used world-wide, that ISBD, for example, might not be considered by this project. It would have been a very important omission as the project work will result in "a mapping of vocabularies from the source standards to support the building of crosswalks and transformations between any of them; a definitive reference set which editors can draw on when creating and developing standards;..."

The inclusion or omission of IFLA representation per se has more to do with personal contacts than any formal international allocation of responsibility. Having Gordon Dunsire as a liaison is completely appropriate and similar to how the Cataloguing Section got involved in earlier collaborative endeavours.

This has been resolved as indicated in the report by Gordon Dunsire below, but there is no guarantee that similar omissions could happen again with other projects.

This situation is not convenient for IFLA, and moreover is not convenient for the majority of libraries in the world.

So I think the Cataloguing Section should consider the following questions:

- Is the role of IFLA as a standards developer and promoter at risk?

No, as long as IFLA maintains the important communication channels with the rest of the information community and the national libraries and other organizations responsible for bibliographic control standards in their countries or regions. There is a wonderful opportunity to engage in collaboration with the Committee of Principals as they begin to discuss future governance for RDA: Resource Description and Access, to assure IFLA has a role in the development of that international cataloguing code, and likewise to stay in touch with other rule making bodies worldwide to collaborate on standards.

- What happens with the support of IFLA to their standards and formats?

Presumably IFLA support would continue as now, with specific funding requests continuing to go to the Governing Board and Professional Committee – IFLA has been very generous in the past and there is no reason to believe that would diminish, as long as the bibliographic control sections maintain a voice on that Professional Committee. The new structure of IFLA should indeed be challenged in that regard – to reaffirm the importance of bibliographic control. But if the national libraries or other agencies are not willing to fund our efforts, then we need to re-evaluate what we do and discover how better to build an appreciation of the importance of bibliographic control worldwide.

- What happened with the traditional UBC Program that was the core which other programs were focused on, the reason why it was managed under the auspices of ICABS (<http://archive.ifla.org/VI/7/icabs.htm>), resulting in the disappearance of the UBC program? Today there appears to be no overall program for bibliographic standards in the core activities of IFLA: it is not mentioned in the descriptions of three pillars; it is not a primary focus of ICADS (and it is clear that any references in ICABS information are historical); and the Cataloguing Section activity is beyond the scope of ICADS (<http://www.ifla.org/about-the-ifla-cdni-alliance-for-digital-strategies>).

See explanations above. UBC was not managed under the auspices of ICABS – only bits that the respective national libraries were interested in supporting – ISBD by Deutsche Nationalbibliothek and FRRB/FRAD by the British Library. Perhaps the Section could provide wording for the IFLA mission and pillars to emphasize bibliographic control and send a strong message to the Professional Committee and Governing Board to reinstate this essential component of the organization to a core activity (and suggest who might fund it).

The Cataloguing Section might also consider the questions posed by Gordon Dunsire (again below) in relation to IFLA's engagement with the semantic web. This discussion document has been sent to the FRBR Review Group as an appendix to a report on its namespace project, and it is hoped that it will be made available to other relevant IFLA groups.

Proposals:

It would be useful if the issue could be referred upwards to IFLA from the Cataloguing and Classification and Indexing. The desired response from IFLA would be any necessary action that could result in a renewal of the UBC program's aims and objectives, and inclusion of the standards as core activities in the three pillars.

The aims and objectives remain with the Cataloguing, Bibliography, and Classification & Indexing Sections, so IFLA Professional Committee and Governing Board must be convinced of the value of seeking funding to re-establish an office for UBC – a strong case needs to be made, as some work needs to be done to find a funding source, to make it an easy decision for the IFLA governing bodies.

We should consider other actions to re-establish the role and promotion of IFLA standards and their importance, and to ensure that this situation does not evolve again. One possibility is to create an Observatory to monitor new and existing projects to identify relevance to IFLA standards provide relevant advice.

Also see suggestions above about connections with rule making bodies (including groups like ISSN in addition to the traditional cataloguing rule makers) and with emerging metadata and other information communities to share IFLA's good work – not force it on people. Others must see the value of the international standards before they will be willing to follow them.

Madrid August 4, 2009
Elena Escolano

Email from Gordon Dunsire, 27 July 2009:

Elena

I note your intention to present some issues to the Standing Committee of the Cataloguing Section concerning IFLA standards, models and formats, including the need to support these standards as a group as well as individually, which is more difficult since the end of the UBC program.

I ... [wish to] raise some specific issues with you, to strengthen your presentation to the Section, ... as far in advance as possible, as it will be (of course) chaotic and we will all be very busy during IFLA.

So I hope you will indulge this long email.

1. I have a specific role on the Standing Committee of the Classification and Indexing Section to liaise between the Section and external projects and initiatives which are relevant to the project to declare FRBR(er) namespaces for compatibility with the Semantic Web. This project itself was stimulated by the use of FRBR(er) elements in RDA, which itself is being declared in namespaces by the DCMI RDA Task Group. The RDA namespaces are now being incorporated directly into the forthcoming RDA online product.

Gordon is also a liaison for the JSC in their outreach efforts. His personal connections have proven to be extremely valuable in assuring communication among the various groups.

2. RDA also uses elements of FRBR(oo) and FRAD. At IFLA 2008, there was general agreement from the FRBR and FRANAR groups that the initial FRBR(er) namespace project should be extended, when suitable, to include FRBR(oo) and FRAD. In fact, the RDA work mentioned in 1. has required the registration of minor parts of FRBR(oo) and FRAD already. RDA has had to do this work without formal liaison with FRBR(oo) and FRAD, although I have done my best with informal liaison.

3. Recently, after the publication of FRAD, there has been discussion about developing a group to oversee, maintain, develop and promote the <FR> family of models. I have suggested that this is necessary from the point-of-view of Semantic Web developments, as the family of models cross-reference each other, and external developments such as RDA use elements from each member of the family. I also pointed out that the VMF project, and future similar projects, would find it easier to liaise formally with one group rather than several.

The incorporation of FRAD and also FRSAD into FRBR was part of the original plan for extending FRBR. We must not lose sight of that, as a single conceptual model is what IFLA should be presenting to the world.

4. I also said that there is a need for space on the IFLA website to provide tools for developers who may wish to use the IFLA standards and models. These tools would consist of the namespaces themselves, contact details, supporting documentation, code samples, etc. - currently, it is very difficult to find everything that IFLA has already published because it is dispersed between IFLA committee structures and the archive ...

Working with the new IFLA Webmaster is an ongoing goal to suggest how to make the bibliographic standards and documents more easily accessible. The Cataloguing Section information officer can play a major role here with the help of the chair through contacts with the IFLA Headquarters and the IFLANET staff.

4. At IFLA 2008 I also discussed Semantic Web compatibility with UNIMARC. The outcome was to wait-and-see what happens.

5. I have asked my VMF colleagues to include UNIMARC in the project as well as ISBD. I have not formally approached PUM about this (as I did with ISBD), but Mirna [Willer] is aware of what is going on. My colleagues have not indicated that they cannot include these other IFLA standards, so I think it is safe to say the VMF now covers FRBR(er), FRBR(oo), FRAD, FRSAD (draft), ISBD and UNIMARC (but only the relationship elements of these, of course). Work on VMF has been slow until now because of vacations, but I intend to contact PUM formally within the next few days, and I will be asking my VMF colleagues for progress reports so that I can report back at IFLA next month.

This is an important connection to make and have IFLA represented at this and related groups. The Section members are the best means to keep updated and watchful for other emerging groups to which the Section should liaise.

6. I was talking with Marie-France Plassard a couple of weeks ago. When she asked what I was currently involved with, I realised that I could express it as "resurrecting UBC, but from the bottom-up (via the Semantic Web) rather than top-down (as IFLA previously attempted to do)". So of course it was very interesting when you indicated concerns about the need for IFLA (via ICADS or another mechanism) to ensure that UBC goals were still being addressed. I hope I have presented evidence above that it is still very important that IFLA is aware of these concerns and issues, and that there is still a good chance to promote UBC, even under a different name.

7. Finally, I think this is something that needs to be discussed at Division level as well as Section level within IFLA. Patrice Landry is aware of some of the issues I have raised, but there have been so many recent developments that we need to appraise him of the overall picture.

And as the Section's representative with the Professional Committee, Patrice is our key spokesperson in promoting these initiatives.

I would be happy to assist with your proposal to the Cataloguing Section, etc. Let me know if you want me to do anything. My IFLA diary is already very full, but I will shortly be working out what reports I should prepare to ISBD, FRBR Review Group, etc. and there will be opportunity to format such reports so that they can be re-used in other contexts (e.g. UNIMARC session).

Identification of potential requirements for managing IFLA namespaces

The FRBR Review Group has initiated a project to develop appropriate namespaces for allowing other communities to use the FRBR(er) model in a semantic web environment. The ISBD Review Group has initiated a project to develop an XML representation of ISBD; certain elements may be more usefully expressed in an XML syntax compatible with the semantic web. Informal interest in these initiatives, and interaction with the semantic web in general, has been expressed by a number of other IFLA standards groups, including FRANAR (for FRAD) and the Permanent UNIMARC Committee. The term “namespace” is used hereafter as a synecdoche for a namespace itself (which assigns a machine-processable identifier to metadata structural and value components expressed in the semantic web’s Resource Description Framework (RDF)) together with XML representations of its whole and parts and associated structural components.

Question: Are all or most IFLA groups responsible for the development and maintenance of bibliographic standards likely to develop namespaces?

The IFLA standards, like ISBD, identify specific elements that could be made available in a namespace to be used for labels in displays. For example, the element of Title (and its translations in all the IFLA supported languages) could be given a URI that could be used by online systems to display the word “Title” as the label for a specific title in a bibliographic description – presumably the specific title (a single value form something being cataloged) would be identified as a title through an XML (or other) syntax that could then be displayed for a human being with words in the language they wish.

So, IFLA’s terms would be the labels for the entities and attributes declared in the IFLA standards. Looking beyond just the namespace declarations, another possible Web service would be for IFLA to also provide the “rules” and guidelines of other standards for machine manipulation. Another option would be for a third-party to take on this work on IFLA’s behalf.

After a namespace has been created and metadata elements declared within it, there are a number of issues associated with the management and deployment of RDF and XML representations of the namespace.

The simplest approach is to make those representations available to other communities and individuals in an open environment. This can be achieved by storing the files on a web server with open access. The representation files can be copied for local processing in third-party services; such services might include the generation of display lists of vocabulary terms, for example the FRBR(er) Group 1 entities, construction of entity-relationship diagrams, translations between machine-readable identifiers and human-readable terms and between different language versions of terms, etc.

One of the more important services is dereferencing (see the Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dereferenceable_Uniform_Resource_Identifier). The most effective use of namespaces in the Semantic Web is the substitution of machine-readable identifiers (URIs) for text values in metadata structures and record instances. This speeds machine-processing and removes the ambiguity in labels such as FRBR’s “Work”. However, at some point it may be necessary to replace the identifiers with human-readable labels through a dereferencing service; the URI is passed to the service, and the appropriate label returned.

Conversations with DCMI communities have raised the problem of rogue dereferencing requests, caused by improperly constructed link resolvers and crawlers. These may misinterpret a URI to be a URL and attempt to harvest the linked document (which is actually the namespace representation) for further automatic link checking. This can result in overloading the server containing the namespace representation. For this reason, it is highly recommended that such servers be isolated from other organisational web servers and use a different domain so that, for example, document services (such as the current IFLA website) can continue to operate satisfactorily.

Question: Do IFLA standards bodies wish to provide dereferencing and other terminology services based on their namespaces?

This gets to whether IFLA is the best organization to provide such ongoing maintenance – perhaps a third party could be convinced to do this work on IFLA’s behalf? The technology infrastructure for this sort of service has not traditionally been in IFLA’s purview.

Conversations with colleagues working on the development of the RDA online product have raised a number of issues related to maintenance of namespaces, including:

- Version control. Even small, relatively static vocabularies require occasional amendment, and it is important that users of those vocabularies can be certain of the version they are employing, and of the existence of later versions.
- Change alerts. A method of alerting vocabulary users to new amendments and versions, for example via RSS, can help promote usage.
- Translations. The NSDL Metadata Registry service, currently used for the FRBR namespace project, has the capability of maintaining controlled vocabularies in translation. An example of this can be seen in the RDA content type vocabulary at <http://metadataregistry.org/vocabulary/show/id/45.html>. The service supports any number of languages, and in any script. It is highly likely that non-English communities will be interested in authoritative translations of vocabulary entries; note that the URI for the term remains the same, thus ensuring automatic interoperability between metadata records created in different countries.
- Feedback and constituency involvement. Social networking space for providing a means to manage comments, suggestions and queries from users, user groups, and constituencies is now becoming an expected feature of open standards administration.

Question: Do IFLA standards bodies wish to offer or utilise any of these functions, or others to be identified, as part of their management of existing and future namespaces?

This begs the question above of whether IFLA should be getting into this business at all or should have a third-party do it.

Another set of issues is associated with promotion and utilisation of the namespace. These include:

- Provision of an Application Programming Interface. This would allow external developers to incorporate IFLA namespace entities using simple programming structures, rather than download the namespace files for local program integration. It would also improve control and co-ordination of use of the namespace, as well as potentially incorporating the version control and translations issues raised above.
- Exposure of the namespace as linked data (see the Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linked_data). This overlaps with the dereferencing issues raised above. Adding IFLA data to the linked data universe will ensure maximum re-use, and potentially have a very significant impact on the development of the semantic web.
- Provision of (authoritative) mappings between namespaces. These namespaces may be IFLA ones, or external, such as the outputs of the Vocabulary Mapping Framework (VMF) (<http://cdlr.strath.ac.uk/VMF/>) project.
- Provision of links to (authoritative) RDF schema using IFLA namespace entities. This is similar to the idea behind the bibliographies maintained to track the interest and take-up of IFLA standards, by acting as a showcase for standards' utility, but could also be part of a clearing-house or directory of external services which have made use of a specific IFLA standard.

Question: Do IFLA standards bodies wish to employ some or all of these methods of promoting their standards to semantic web developers, with the secondary result of improving bibliographic control at a global level?

There is a giant leap here to get to specific applications that improve global bibliographic control, but certainly having IFLA help build the building blocks for such a future, would be wonderful. But, whether IFLA needs to provide the services, or just the standards that would be presented through such services depends on the ongoing support IFLA can provide. Is it a realistic task for an organization run by volunteers that rotate membership frequently?

Need for an IFLA standards namespaces framework

There are number of reasons why IFLA might consider developing an overarching framework for promoting and disseminating its standards.

There is a current framework implicit in the structure of IFLA divisions, sections and special interest groups. Standards produced by IFLA are constructed for a print-based environment, and most are made available in digital format as electronic surrogates of the print-based originals. There is no single place on the IFLA website where all standards are listed. Instead, retrieval requires knowledge of which area of the IFLA organisational structure is responsible, or enough of a citation to carry out a keyword search.

Question: Does IFLA wish to improve the identification and retrieval of its published standards?

This can be done in many ways, only one of which is converting the elements of the standards into controlled vocabularies in namespaces. A first step can be as noted above to improve the communication with the IFLANET staff and work together to see how much IFLA is willing to support and then seeking third-party support for what else may need to be done.

However, the world in which libraries increasingly operate is digital. Non-IFLA communities and individuals expect a global information management community to present its outputs in formats that can be exploited more effectively by digital tools and techniques. One of the most significant developments in the digital environment is the creation of the semantic web, which offers huge potential for the utilisation of the standards and expertise of professional librarianship.

A vast majority of the world's library users are in countries without reliable electricity let alone internet access. However, that said, for the Web-enabled part of the world, such advances to build the infrastructure should lead to improved global bibliographic control.

Question: Does IFLA recognise the potential role of its activities in developing the semantic web, and the potential role of the semantic web in furthering IFLA's aims? Does IFLA wish to engage more fully with the semantic web?

IFLA as a trusted source of information has a great potential for serving the Web community. The question is not recognizing a potential role, but finding a way to sustain such a role within the IFLA organization. Is it realistic?

The semantic web architecture has nothing to say about the veracity of statements expressed in RDF. That is, false statements can be made, and there is no intrinsic way of determining whether a statement is true or false. Instead, extrinsic methods must be used: What is the source of the statement? Is the source trustworthy? Does the source ensure that statements remain true? There are no established protocols for answering these questions, but some assessment of veracity can be made from knowing which body created and maintains the namespaces used in RDF statements. If IFLA namespaces have "IFLA" as part of their URIs, preferably in the base domain used for all URIs in a namespace, then the brand itself can indicate a degree of reliability. Other techniques might involve human-readable background or explanatory documentation associated with a namespace.

Question: Does IFLA wish to capitalise on its brand and standing in the library world by extending it to namespaces for its standards?

Acknowledging IFLA as the source for its bibliographic standards should be part of the re-use of such data – regardless of whether IFLA provides its own namespaces or not. As noted above, namespaces are just one small part of the infrastructure that is needed.

Two major initiatives are underway in non-IFLA communities. These are the development of RDA: resource description and access as a digital publication exploiting the semantic web to express its metadata structure and value vocabularies, and the VMF as a hub-and-spoke approach to improving interoperability between many bibliographic standards in the semantic web. VMF is essentially an extension to the RDA/ONIX framework for resource description. Both initiatives involve IFLA standards: RDA is linked to elements of FRBR(er), FRBR(oo), and FRAD; VMF will include FRBR(er), FRBR(oo) via CIDOC CRM, and elements of FRAD, ISBD and UNIMARC. Both projects need to liaise with the bodies responsible for standards governance and maintenance, to ensure that their work is authoritative and "official".

Also VIAF should be mentioned that links the world's name authority data.

Question: Would liaison between IFLA and such projects be more efficient and effective if there is a single IFLA body to contact, rather than the individual components of the IFLA organisational structure?

The single body now is the specific Section or core activity within IFLA – especially Cataloguing for ISBD and FRBR (and its related models) and UNIMARC.

Many of the IFLA standards have interdependencies with each other, expressed as references and mappings. In addition, many IFLA standards have interdependencies with external standards, and in some cases the same external standard. Such dependencies can be chained together, showing indirect dependencies between pairs of standards (see my WLIC 2009 paper on UNIMARC, RDA and the Semantic Web available at <http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/papers/ifla75/135-dunsire-en.pdf>)

Question: Are the dependencies between IFLA standards, and between specific IFLA standards and external standards, properly understood by IFLA standards bodies, and sufficiently well understood to ensure semantic cohesion and avoid duplication of effort?

Yes, and that is why after each Working Group there are proposals to update earlier “standards”.

The potential requirements for managing an IFLA namespace identified above are common to all namespaces.

Question: Is it more effective or efficient for IFLA namespaces to be developed and administered as a whole, or separately by the relevant standards bodies?

See comments above, plus the current IFLA structure has allowed the Cataloguing Section the anomaly of having “Review Groups” for ISBD and FRBR, which were recognized as needing ongoing maintenance (rather than review every 5 or 10 years as was more common in the past). The Cataloguing Section thus is in a unique position within IFLA to play the role of administering the user of its standards (whether through namespaces or other applications), but should be realistic about whether it is able to sustain such a responsibility or should negotiate with a third party to administer such services on its behalf. Any such negotiations would require approval by the Professional Committee/Governing Board and should be discussed with those IFLA bodies well ahead of time to build support for whatever position is proposed.

Gordon Dunsire
4 Aug 2009