



**IFLA Reference and Information Services Section Annual Report  
2010 /  
Progress Report 2007-2009  
Martin Kesselman, Chair**

As of July 2009, there are approximately 70 institutional, association, and personal members. More information on the section (current officers and members, current and past strategic plans, archive of newsletters and projects can be found here: <http://www.ifla.org/en/reference-and-information-services>

**RISS Focus**

According to our current strategic plan: The Reference and Information Services Section addresses all aspects of reference work in all regions of the world - in all types of libraries and information service organizations. Our emphasis is on unrestricted availability of information in the digital and physical library and the support of quality services through the development of standards, guidelines, programs, projects and training opportunities.

Mission: The mandate of the IFLA Reference and Information Services Section is to promote unrestricted, free, quality reference and information services world-wide.

**Progress on Goals (please see minutes of meetings for more information):**

The section is in the process of a two-year IFLA-supported project to create a "How Do You Say Reference" Website that highlights library reference and information services worldwide. LIS students have been interviewing public, academic, and special librarians around the globe as to the ways they assist information seekers, the training received to meet patron needs, and global perspectives on reference and information service assessment. The website will be interactive so that other international librarians can provide information on their countries.

The section developed a Toolkit for Reference and Information Services that was designed to enrich and advance reference knowledge and services, preparing librarians and decision makers to understand reference functions and the information needs of library users. The toolkit was abandoned as it was difficult to update and we learned that in order for libraries to make use of the resources included, there needed to first be an awareness of the utility of reference services. This led to the idea of a more sustainable "How Do You Say Reference" project noted above.

We held very successful open sessions and satellite meetings on topics such as Resource Sharing, Reference and Collection Development in a Digital Age, Education and Training for Reference and Information Services for the Future, The Virtual Librarian (including the

presentation of the IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines, Proactive Reference Services, and for this year in Gothenburg, Next Generation Reference and Information Literacy.

Unfortunately the satellite session we planned for this year was cancelled due to lack of registrations.

Our Digital Reference Guidelines are translated into 12 languages. <http://www.ifla.org/en/publications/ifla-digital-reference-guidelines>

The section had included a compilation of Collaborative E-Reference Services around the World. This was quite useful at the time when virtual reference collaborations were in their infancy. However, since this directory was too difficult to update with the growth of so many collaborations, it was removed from the current website.

To increase membership and participation in the activities of the section, the section had created a bookmark in many languages and a brief newsletter which we affectionately called "the shortie," that was a two sided newsletter that could be handed out at the IFLA conference.

### **Future Directions**

The newsletter has been difficult to create and a newsletter committee is probably necessary to develop a more sustainable model -- possibly an ongoing blog. Entries from the blog could then easily be selected to create a more formal newsletter.

Other Web 2.0 applications need to be considered for better section communication and to engage with other IFLA members. Many of these initiatives have been on hold waiting for greater functionality of the IFLA website.

There is great concern about continuity within the section. Almost all active members of the section will have completed two 4 year terms in Puerto Rico and will be going off the section. There are only a few new members and of those, only a few have been active participants.

There was major disappointment due to the cancellation of the satellite meeting due to lack of registrations by a specific date. So much effort went into the development of the program and local arrangements. Much of the blame is on IFLA for eliminating the day of workshops that used to take place as part of the conference program adding to the value of the conference. Satellite meetings usually attract non-IFLA attendees and do not add value to the IFLA meeting itself. I hope our section in conjunction with our leadership group will advocate for the return of the workshops within the main conference.

In San Juan, we hope to go back to a more interactive meeting format which was quite popular when the section was a discussion group. We hope to develop a workshop program possibly with lightning talks and a review of the How Do You Say Reference Project.