



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

## General Conference

36th Session, Paris 2011

# 36 C

36 C/20

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Item 5.15 of the provisional agenda

### DIGITAL LIBRARY MANIFESTO OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS (IFLA)

#### OUTLINE

**Source:** During its 18th session, held in February 2011, the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme (IFAP) examined the *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries* and recommended its submission to the General Conference for consideration at its 36th session.

**Purpose:** This item, included in the agenda of the General Conference at the request of Austria, presents the *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries* and seeks its endorsement by the General Conference.

**Decision required:** Paragraph 7.

## BACKGROUND

1. UNESCO's intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP) provides a framework for international cooperation, partnerships, resource mobilization and common action in the development of policies, strategies, methods and tools for building an information society for all. The Executive Board, at its 180th session, endorsed information accessibility and information preservation as two of the five priorities of IFAP.
2. Accordingly, IFAP has been giving attention to the challenges and opportunities related to information accessibility and preservation. The IFAP Working Group on Information Preservation in cooperation with IFLA elaborated the *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries*. During its 18th session (Paris, 21-22 February 2011), the IFAP Bureau examined and approved the Manifesto, and recommended that it be transmitted to the 36th session of the General Conference for consideration.
3. The *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries* provides principles to assist libraries in undertaking sustainable and interoperable digitization activities. Furthermore, it provides impetus to librarians to proactively engage in the development and implementation of national e-strategies that support national and international digital library initiatives through large-scale digitization programmes, which make cultural and scientific information more widely accessible to all.
4. IFLA maintains a long and lasting partnership with UNESCO notably in the areas of library cooperation, promotion of universal access to information and information preservation. This work is conducted through the establishment of information frameworks that aims to disseminate and support the discussion and implementation of improved practices, and through capacity-building to enhance the management of information resources at the community level.
5. Previous IFLA Manifestos, endorsed by UNESCO such as the IFLA Multicultural Manifesto, the IFLA School Library Manifesto and the UNESCO/IFLA Public Library Manifesto continue to demonstrate very satisfactory global impact. They provide frameworks for shaping and guiding library programmes, supporting outreach, and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.
6. The *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries* represents an important step for building on this successful cooperation and in particular contributing to the attainment of the objectives outlined in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

### Proposed draft resolution

7. In light of the foregoing, the General Conference may wish to adopt the following resolution:

The General Conference,

1. Having examined document 36 C/20,
2. Recalling UNESCO's mandate to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image and to maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge,
3. Recognizing that information is critical to the attainment of agreed international development goals and convinced of the pivotal contribution that libraries provide for bridging the existing information and digital divides,
4. Further recalling the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and bearing in mind the responsibility conferred on UNESCO for the implementation of Action Line C3 "Access to Information",

5. Recognizing that the Manifesto is an important tool for advancing the WSIS outcomes and the IFAP priorities,
6. Invites Member States to endorse the *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries*;
7. Further invites Member States and all concerned stakeholders to take into consideration and apply the *IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries* in the process of building equitable and inclusive knowledge societies.



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## IFLA Manifesto for Digital Libraries

*Bridging the Digital Divide: making the world's cultural and scientific heritage accessible to all*

### The digital divide is an information divide

Bridging the digital divide is a key factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Access to information resources and the means of communication supports health and education as much as cultural and economic development.

The dissemination of information enables citizens to participate in life-long learning and education. Information about the world's achievements allows everyone to participate constructively in the development of their own social environment.

Equal access to the cultural and scientific heritage of mankind is every person's right and helps promote learning and understanding of the richness and diversity of the world, not only for the present generation, but also for the generations to come.

Libraries have long been essential agents in fostering peace and human values. Libraries now operate digitally, and their digital services open up a new channel to the universe of knowledge and information, connecting cultures across geographical and social boundaries.

### Digital libraries

A *digital library* is an online collection of digital objects, of assured quality, that are created or collected and managed according to internationally accepted principles for collection development and made accessible in a coherent and sustainable manner, supported by *services* necessary to allow users to retrieve and exploit the resources.

A digital library forms an integral part of the services of a library, applying new technology to provide access to digital collections. Within a digital library collections are created, managed and made accessible in such a way that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities.

A collaborative digital library allows public and research libraries to form a network of digital information in response to the needs of the Information Society. The systems of all partners in a collaborative digital library must be able to interoperate.

A digital library complements digital archives and initiatives for the preservation of information resources.

### Mission and Goals

The mission of the digital library is to give direct access to information resources, both digital and non-digital, in a structured and authoritative manner and thus to link information technology, education and culture in contemporary library service. To fulfil this mission the following goals are pursued:

- Supporting digitisation, access to and preservation of cultural and scientific heritage.
- Providing access for all users to the information resources collected by libraries, while respecting intellectual property rights.
- Creating interoperable digital library systems to promote open standards and access.



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- Supporting the pivotal role of libraries and information services in the promotion of common standards and best practices.
- Creating awareness of the urgent need to ensure the permanent accessibility of digital material.
- Linking digital libraries to high-speed research and development networks.
- Taking advantage of the increasing convergence of communications media and institutional roles to create and disseminate digital content.

### Content creation, access and preservation

Building a digital library requires sources of content in digital form, whether digitised or born digital content.

Many countries have created national digitisation programmes, and more will do so, as agreed by the World Summit on the Information Society.<sup>1</sup> IFLA strongly supports and encourages both national and international digitisation strategies as well as single library and partnership initiatives. Digitisation allows the creation of virtual collections bringing together material across continents. Digitisation also has a preservation role in the case of deteriorating original documents and media.

The products of digitisation themselves must be preserved, just as born-digital material must be preserved. All digital library initiatives must include plans for digital preservation by an appropriate authority.

The digital library serves as an environment to bring together collections, services, and people in support of the full life cycle of creation, dissemination, use and preservation of data, information and knowledge.

*Interoperability* and *sustainability* are key to the vision of digital libraries able to communicate with each other. Digital libraries that conform to commonly agreed open standards and protocols improve world-wide knowledge dissemination and access.

### Implementing the Manifesto

*IFLA encourages national governments, intergovernmental organisations and sponsors* to recognise the strategic importance of digital libraries and to actively support their development. Contributions to large-scale digitisation programmes serve to make cultural and scientific information resources more widely available, and advance national and international digital library initiatives that will be sustainable over time.

Specific legislation and financial support from national and local governments is required to bridge the digital divide and to ensure sustainable access. Any long-term strategy must aim to bridge the digital divide and to strengthen the development of education, literacy, culture - and most of all – to provide access to information.

Bridging the digital divide also implies the need for action by the appropriate authorities to incorporate information literacy into education curricula, and to raise awareness that much valuable information from the past is not in digital form.

*IFLA encourages libraries* to collaborate with other cultural and scientific heritage institutions to provide rich and diverse digital resources that support education and research, tourism and the creative industries.

Consultation with rights owners and other stakeholders is essential. Designers and implementers of digital libraries should consult fully with indigenous communities, whose tangible and intangible cultural heritage it is proposed to

<sup>1</sup> World Summit on the Information Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, Tunis 2005: 'Agenda for the Information Society', paragraph 93.



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digitise, to ensure that their rights and wishes are respected. The implementation of the digital library must also support equity of access to the content by meeting the special needs of people with disabilities.

Authorities should be aware that active planning for digital libraries at any level (national, regional and local) should cover the following issues:

- Trained personnel
- Adequate buildings and facilities
- Integrated planning for libraries and archives
- Funding
- Target setting

National e-strategies, as recommended by the World Summit on the Information Society,<sup>2</sup> could establish a firm basis for planning digital libraries.

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<sup>2</sup> See: World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva 2003: Plan of action, Action line C1, paragraph 8; Tunis 2005, 'Agenda for the Information Society', paragraph 90.