IFLA Section
Library Services to People with Special Needs

Library Services to People with Special Needs Section
Newsletter February 2023

Content

1. Introduction from Chair

Welcome to LSN's new Newsletter with a whole new editorial team.

As a Section we are very active but most of the time we are active behind the scenes. LSN's Newsletter is one of the ways to show our colleagues the specfic fields we are active in and the scopes in which we are trying to change our field and the world in general. Social equity, accessibility and inclusive libraries are what we are all for. LSN has several Guidelines upcoming since Guidelines are what we are best in but we also do so much.
We hope you will enjoy our issue.

I would personally like to thank our standing committee members, newsletter contributors, colleagues and friends of this section for their continued support and contribution to this issue.

Maela Rakočević Uvodić, Chair
IFLA Section Library Services to People with Special Needs

2. Section News

2.1 Session on Prison Libraries at IFLA WLIC in Dublin

A session just focusing on prison libraries took place in Dublin on 27 July 2022, titled 'Books Beyond Bars – Engaging Prison Libraries'.

This open session took a closer look at selected examples of prison library systems and their services around the world, outlining best practice, opportunities and possible challenges, thus demonstrating their transformative potential as informational, educational, cultural and recreational meeting and learning spaces.

We were very surprised and pleased to see that the session was very well attended and received with over 100 participants listening to presentations from Germany, Chile, Ireland and Australia. After the session, several participants took the opportunity to network with the speakers and each other.

The Chair of our LSN Section, Maela Rakočević Uvodić (Croatia) gave her welcome remarks, followed by a global introduction to IFLA's work on prison libraries by Lisa Krolak and Gerhard Peschers from Germany. Then we had the chance to learn about the results of a recent Irish Prison Library Review, shared by Jayne Finlay (Northern Ireland) and Anne Marie O'Dwyer (Ireland). Miguel Ángel Rivera Donoso told us about modernizing prison libraries in Chile and creating the Ibero-American Network for Reading Promotion in Prisons, and finally we could listen to a pre-recorded video, where Jane Garner (Australia) informed us about the process and content of updating the 'IFLA Guidelines for library services to prisoners'.

After the session a group of ten librarians had the wonderful opportunity to visit Mountjoy Prison and its library in Dublin, the biggest prison in Ireland. We had the privilege that the three prison librarians working in Dublin prisons showed us around and answered all our questions.

In the meantime, the 'IFLA Guidelines for library services to prisoners' were officially endorsed by IFLA. In the next months, we will share them with the global library community and during the poster session at IFLA WLIC 2023 in Rotterdam and support their translation!

Description picture: group picture in front of Mount Joy Prison. © Vivianne Haas

By Lisa Krolak (Chief Librarian, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany) l.krolak@unesco.org

2.2 IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 2022

The LSN Section welcomes the launch of the new the new IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 2022 during IFLA WLIC in Dublin.

We are particularly pleased to see that the new Manifesto underlines the need for public libraries to be inclusive and accessible. This is stated, for example, in the following paragraph:

> "The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, poor digital or computer skills, poor literacy abilities or people in hospital or prison."

By Lisa Krolak (Chief Librarian, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany)
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2.3 Libraries and the Autism Spectrum: The new IFLA Guidelines

More and more people are being diagnosed with autism. The majority are children under 3 years of age, but there can also be adults with a late diagnosis.

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), prevalence is constantly increasing. The last report shows that 1 out of 44 children have a diagnosis of autism.

The most notable features of the spectrum are difficulty in communication, restricted interests and challenges in social interaction. However, the manifestations can vary greatly from one person to another, according to factors such as age, gender, therapeutic treatments undergone, and the level of the condition, among many others.

Although some libraries have already initiated actions to accommodate this growing public, a large number of them still deal with this type of user in an intuitive way, trying to do their best, improvising and learning from trial and error.

There are initiatives that have addressed the situation in a planned and informed manner. We have found public and school libraries that have developed specific programs aimed at this type of public. Others have generated documents to help libraries in general. Some libraries have made strategic alliances with universities or other institutions specializing in the subject, which have contributed their knowledge, linking and experimenting with concrete actions, such as studies of parents with children within the spectrum, with the aim of presenting them with an offer more precisely tailored to their needs and interests.

Many others have already trained their staff since it has been observed that a poorly prepared team may even cause people on the autism spectrum to feel uncomfortable enough to never return to a library again.

There are also institutions that certify that certain public spaces, including libraries, are suitable for people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Simultaneously, the universe of university libraries has not lagged behind in this adaptation of services, necessary to accommodate the increase of young people on the autism spectrum in higher education.

We know that any library that adapts its services for people on the autism spectrum is also a better library in general.

At the same time, it is worth mentioning that there is a lack of knowledge about autism, not only in the library field, but also in the community as a whole.

In view of the above and considering the existing experiences and available resources, the IFLA LSN professional committee has considered that it is time to start designing global guidelines that can guide and serve as a practical tool for thousands of libraries around the world, which are becoming acquainted with autism. Therefore, this process has been included as a priority in the current Action Plan of the committee.

The process necessary to concretize these guidelines will be led by two members of the LSN professional committee: María Isabel Abalo (Argentina) and Miguel Rivera Donoso (Chile), who in addition to having a wide experience in library management, have been trained and have first person experience with autism and its challenges.

For this important work, a group of experts with global representation is convening, with the inclusion and participation of autistic people.

We hope to have news soon.

By Miguel Rivera (Coordinator of the Plan of Prison Libraries, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Chile) and María Isabel Abalo (Professor of the Librarianship Career, National University of the Litoral, Argentina)
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2.4 What's in a name? Defining our true values

The Library Services to People with Special Needs Section is one of IFLA's oldest sections dating back to 1931 when its mission was to promote professional library services to people in hospitals. Due to a range of disabilities that often were secondary to the cause of hospitalization, some patients required special materials. For example: sensory and mobility aids as well as special services. Very soon it became evident that the Committee needed to become advocates for those in the community who cannot make use of conventional library resources.

LSN now targets a wide range of groups. These groups include, but are not limited to, people who are in hospitals, nursing homes, and other care facilities; people in prisons; people who are experiencing homelessness; people with physical disabilities; people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind; people with dyslexia; and people with cognitive and mental disabilities. Throughout the history of LSN, the necessity of having a name that reflected the Section's current work best rose several times, because the terminology for appropriately addressing different groups

within LSN was constantly changing. The last name change occured in late 2008 when IFLA approved a proposal by the Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons Section (LSDP) to rename it to Library Services to People with Special Needs (LSN).

In 2021, when the majority of LSN's SC members changed, a decision was made that it was the right time for the name change, reflecting negative connotations that began to be attached to certain terms and also because language is constantly evolving. It is evident that attitudes towards a certain group of people is reflected in the name used to address them. According to this preconception, unequal treatment or discrimination forms in the name with which, perhaps inadvertently, a person or group of people are labeled as less valuable, lacking worth or potential, and thereby reducing them to stereotypes instead of experiencing them as persons who have some difficulties, but at the same time have abilities, desires and needs like all of us. The Section wants to use language that is respectful and informed while at the same time sensitizes the wider library community. In doing so, we have found ourselves taking another look at the term "special needs". While there are some groups that continue to use this term, many if not most people with disabilities question the idea that their needs are "special". LSN believes that it is critical to listen to the language people use about themselves – they know best how they want to be addressed, referred to and described. Respect begins and ends with listening and should be step one in our efforts to truly serve the entire community.

It is a really difficult task that LSN took on because in the last decade several new terms have come into use:

- **Accessibility** – designing systems so that all people are able to participate regardless of whether they have a disability like: blindness or low vision, deafness or are hard of hearing, deafblindness, physical disabilities, mental health challenges, speech and language disorders, or learning and cognitive disabilities, etc. Accessibility means ensuring everybody can use the same services without preventing anyone from fully participating.

- **Inclusiveness** – a belief that the design whether it is a type of technology, an everyday object, or information should be mindful of a broad range of users, their different abilities, different environments, situations, and contexts they are coming from. Inclusivity involves representation, as well as providing opportunities or resources for people who have been marginalized or excluded from the society by removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully engaging in any aspect of their life. Inclusiveness is different from Accessibility because inclusivity does not specifically address a particular need or an issue but provides a range of tools and features that the end user can choose from to fit their requirements in the given context/situation.

- **Diversity** – psychological, physical, and social differences that exist among any and all individuals that include but are not limited to - race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, cognitive or physical ability, and the range of learning styles.

- **Equity** – the quality of being fair and impartial. Social equity takes into account systemic inequalities to ensure everyone in a community has access to the same opportunities and outcomes. Equity of all kinds acknowledges that inequalities exist and works to eliminate them. Social equity is the fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice and equity in the formation of public policy. Although equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that all people do not have the same starting point and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.

A pretty hard task is in front of the whole committee but it is essential in these evolving times to choose the right name that is self explanatory and that covers all target groups.

Description picture: pictograms indicating LSN target groups: people who are in hospitals, nursing homes, and other care facilities; people in prisons; people with physical disabilities; people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind; people with dyslexia, people with cognitive and mental disabilities.

By Chair Maela Rakočević Uvodić (Librarian - information specialist, The City Library of Zagreb, Croatia)
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3. News from LSN members: get inspired!

3.1 Public libraries supporting dementia-friendly communities: Overview of two projects in Croatia

Dementia or neurocognitive disorder is regarded as a major cause of disability and dependency among older adults. It is a progressive and incurable disease that impacts their cognitive, emotional, social and physical skills. Since the number of people with dementia is expected to grow due to world's ageing population, many communities throughout the world are making a formal commitment to develop dementia-friendly environments that are responsive to the needs of people with dementia, where they are respected, supported and included and have control over their day-to-day lives.

Although librarians have not been traditionally recognized as professionals caring for persons with dementia, librarians and information professionals are increasingly taking steps to become more dementia-friendly and offer meaningful activities and programming for this underserved patron group. A recent study conducted among Croatia's public libraries has shown that librarians have relatively poor knowledge of dementia and currently do not provide any service for this user group. However, they do provide resources for their caregivers (books about dementia, autobiographies about living with dementia, picture books) and organize lectures and other informal social events such as 'Memory cafes', which provide caregivers with opportunities for social interaction and access to relevant resources about community services.

The Department for Information Sciences at Osijek University, Croatia, has been actively engaged in two research and development projects focusing on dementia. From 2018 to 2020, a team of researchers (librarians, health professionals and local civic organizations) explored the information needs and behavior of people who care for their family members with Alzheimer's Disease (AD) in the city of Osijek and its surroundings. Findings of this study indicated that caregivers face immense physical, psychological, emotional, social and financial impact and require diverse information (about disease symptoms and their progression, medication and treatments, caring for people with dementia, non-pharmacological therapies, legal and financial information, benefits information, and available local services). However, they do not know who to ask. Therefore, a brochure with easy-to-read information about AD was produced (in Croatian), which included all the information that was reported relevant by respondents in the study, together with a map and contact details for organizations and places in the community where they can obtain reliable information, advice, and psychological support. The brochure is freely available online and was distributed to local health institutions and libraries.

Description picture 1: workshop for librarians on bibliotherapy for senior citizens
Description picture 2: brain aerobics workshop for senior citizens
© Sanjica Faletar

At the moment, the Department is running a three-year project entitled 'Building Dementia-Friendly Public Libraries: Theoretical and Practical Implications' in which an interdisciplinary team of researchers tries to understand how public libraries can promote and support the development of dementia friendly communities. Apart from scholarly studies (into knowledge about AD among librarians and library students, librarians' experiences and attitudes toward dementia library programming etc.), the project activities include educational activities for librarians and citizens aimed at raising awareness about dementia, removal of social stigma connected to that disease, and social inclusion as well as cultural engagement of persons with dementia. So far, a two-day training has been organized for the general public, health care, social work and library students and seasoned librarians. It addressed topics such as dementia symptoms and treatment, community rehabilitation of people with dementia, non-pharmacological therapies, reading programs for people with dementia, communication with people with dementia, human rights of people with dementia, successful cognitive aging, and dementia-friendly communities. During the World Alzheimer's Month many outreach activities have been organized for senior citizens such as a Memory Café, a reading group and brain fitness workshops in collaboration with community institutions (libraries, neurology department from local hospital, civil society organizations, Red Cross, a local memory association etc.). At the moment, a team of researchers is exploring the concept of socially responsible publishing and is preparing the publication of the first book in Croatian that will be adapted to the needs of people with dementia.

Both projects seek to contribute to the general understanding of public libraries as trusted and respected institutions in their communities that are perfectly suited to raise the quality of everyday life for people with dementia and their caregivers, and to take a proactive role in supporting health and wellbeing, building understanding and public awareness in their communities.

By Sanjica Faletar (Full professor, University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia)
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3.2 'I hate reading!' Luisterpuntbibliotheek (Flanders) celebrates 10th anniversary of campaign for children with dyslexia

Approximately 5% of the children in Flanders (Belgium) has dyslexia to the extent that they need learning aids. However, this does not mean that every child already uses or knows about these tools. That's why Luisterpuntbibliotheek and Eureka ADIBib launched the campaign 'I hate reading' in 2012. Luisterpunt is the Flemish library serving persons with print disabilities and lends out Daisy audio books. Eureka ADIBib converts school textbooks to accessible pdf files (ADIBooks) to be used with reading aloud software.

'I hate reading!' ('Ik haat lezen' in Dutch) is a provocative slogan, but one in which many children with dyslexia recognise themselves. At school and at home they put much time and effort in something that comes easily and naturally for their classmates. With the free Daisy audio books and ADIBooks, we try to turn 'I hate reading!' into 'May I have another book?'. With Daisy books, for example, children can exercise reading by combining it with the print book (at adjusted reading speed), learn new vocabulary and read the same (more difficult) books as their friends and classmates. A boost for their self-confidence!

Description picture: logo 'Ik haat lezen' (I hate reading). The words 'Ik haat lezen' are written in red, in a cool graffiti style. © Ik haat lezen / Luisterpunt

Luisterpunt created a separate campaign website, several posters, bookmarks and flyers. For several years, mostly in October, posters were hung in the largest train stations in Flanders. Luisterpunt delivered many workshops and webinars for teachers, librarians, and parents. We published articles widely in general and more specialist media and focused great attention to social media. Close cooperation with schools, speech therapists and public libraries was crucial to lowering the threshold to using Daisy books. Saskia Boets of Luisterpunt was also co-project leader for the 'IFLA LSN Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia', in which 'I hate reading' is mentioned as an example.

By the end of 2021, 6.688 persons with dyslexia used Daisy audio books regularly (at the start in 2012, 451 persons were members) and discovered that reading can also be fun. Now 88% of the public libraries in Flanders use Daisy audio books. There is, however, still a lot of work to do.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the campaign and reach even more children, (grand)parents, teachers, speech therapists and librarians, several projects were launched in the autumn of 2021: a tv spot on national television, a digital 'starting kit', video testimonials, extra attention to social media, a symposium, webinars, and … an online escape room about reading, dyslexia, reading aids but most of all reading pleasure. In this escape room, children become detectives and are told to find authors who have mysteriously disappeared. Along the way, they must solve puzzles while meeting famous persons with dyslexia. In one puzzle the player experiences what it means to have dyslexia and what difference reading aloud software can make.

More information: www.ikhaatlezen.be (website in Dutch)
Follow 'Ik haat lezen' on Facebook and Instagram

Description picture: poster campaign 'Ik haat lezen'. A boy sits on a couch, reads a book, and listens to the Daisy audio book on his tablet at the same time. The 'Ik haat lezen' logo is written in red, in a cool graffiti style.
Text on poster (in Dutch): 'Ik haat lezen' presenteert: Stream je luisterboek! Dyslexie? Ga voor een luisterboek! Check ikhaatlezen.be en download de Anderslezen-app.
English translation: 'I hate reading' presents: Stream your audiobook! Dyslexia? Go for an audio book! Check out ikhaatlezen.be and download the Anderslezen app.
© Ik haat lezen / Luisterpunt

By Diego Anthoons (Head of Communications, Luisterpuntbibliotheek - Flemish library serving persons with print disabilities, Belgium)
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3.3 Malaysian Librarians' Involvement in Marrakesh Treaty

As nations become aware of inclusive literacy, many countries have placed the Marrakesh Treaty on their national agendas. Similarly, Malaysia moved toward adopting the Treaty, which aligns itself with the Malaysia Persons with Disabilities Act. Malaysia officially joined the Budapest Treaty and Marrakesh Treaty,

administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), on 31 March 2022.

As background, the Marrakesh Treaty makes the production and international transfer of specially-adapted books for people with blindness or visual impairments easier. It does this by establishing a set of limitations and exceptions to traditional copyright law. The Marrakesh Treaty was adopted on June 27 2013, and entered into force on September 30, 2016.

To ensure the success of the Marrakesh Treaty, Malaysian librarians have actively collaborated with several advocacy agencies such as the Malaysian Librarians Association, the National Library of Malaysia, various academic libraries, the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Malaysia. The involvement of Malaysian librarians showcases the dynamic roles of librarians in supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and IFLA Strategy.

A series of discussions, workshops, and meetings were set up to discuss the impact of the Treaty on copyright, publication industries, and enforcement. One of the highly anticipated activities was the revision of the Malaysia Copyright Act, which was led by the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia. The involvement of librarians as part of the committee ensures the inclusiveness of the Malaysia Copyright Act. A series of awareness programs and workshops was planned in making sure of the success of the treaty.

The Marrakesh Treaty Implementation and Inclusive Library Workshop was conducted by the Librarians Association of Malaysia and the University of Malaya Library. Various types of librarians joined the workshop including librarians from the National Library of Malaysia, academic libraries, and State libraries. Academicians and pensioners also participated in the workshop. The objectives of the workshop were 1) to ensure librarians are given early exposure to the impact of the Marrakesh Treaty, 2) to prepare the participants for the free exchange of materials, training of the use of technology and equipment that support accessibility concept and competencies, and issues related to human resources, 3) to increase awareness and understanding of the concepts of inclusive libraries and information centers. In addition, a series of webinars was organized by the Standing Committee of Library Services to People with Special Needs via the Librarians Association of Malaysia's official Facebook page. Various topics were discussed including copyright, library service and facilities, and the inclusive concepts in the library. Likewise, the Research and Copyright Technical Committee for Books and Textbooks aims to produce a set of policies to be used as a guideline. The basic concepts of the Marrakesh Treaty were discussed to ensure the policies were comprehensive.

Additionally, the National Library of Malaysia hosted a series of workshops to discuss the policies. Besides librarians, the workshop was attended by various agencies such as Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Living Costs. The last time Malaysian Librarians were involved with the Treaty was during 87th IFLA World Library and Information Congress, in Dublin, Ireland. A poster on Malaysian

Librarian's involvement in Marrakesh Treaty was accepted to be presented during the IFLA WLIC 2022. The poster was submitted by Dr. Mohd Faizal Hamzah and Dr. Ranita Hisham from Universiti Malaya. The poster presented a list of initiatives completed by Malaysian librarians to support the Treaty. Many programmes have been planned for 2023. The involvement of Malaysian librarians will guarantee the success of the Treaty in Malaysia. This involvement will demonstrate a strong presence to local and international organizations of Malaysian librarians as valued partners, strengthening the global voice of libraries.

Description picture 1: Malaysian delegates who attended the 87th IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Dublin, Ireland, stand before a poster submitted by Dr. Mohd Faizal Hamzah and Dr. Ranita Hisham from Universiti Malaya, entitled 'Malaysia Librarian's involvement in Marrakesh Treaty
Description picture 2: participants and librarians from all over Malaysia attended Marrakesh Treaty Implementation and Inclusive Library Workshop Hosted by Universiti Malaya Library
© Mohd Faizal Hamzah

By Mohd Faizal Hamzah (Senior Librarian, University of Malaya, Malaysia)
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3.4 Hot off the Press: Disabilities and the Library. A textbook for librarians and library administrators

LSN committee member Clayton A. Copeland has edited the collected volume 'Disabilities and the Library: Fostering Equity for Patrons and Staff with Differing Abilities', published in November 2022 by ABC-CLIO. Corinna Haas, also a member of the LSN committee and librarian at the German Centre of Gerontology in Berlin, spoke with her about the book project.

Inspired by the school library: about the editor

Clayton A. Copeland is the director of the iSchool Laboratory for Leadership in the Equity of Access and Diversity (LLEAD*)* at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina, USA. Her research focuses on equity of access to

information for underserved populations and literacy. Clayton also teaches classes in Library and Information Science.

Thanks to school librarians in Clinton, South Carolina, where she was educated and served as a library assistant throughout her school years, she became part of the library field. Clayton's librarians, Mrs. Ellen H. Ramsey and Mrs. Vicky T. Culbertson, created a welcoming place for everybody. Clayton wanted to give that kind of experience to other children and young adults and wanted to become a school librarian herself. Along the way, the opportunity for earning a doctorate and then completing a post-doctoral fellowship presented themselves, and so she became a researcher and university lecturer. A "heart-felt responsibility" to help the world to learn about differences underlies Clayton's work and specifically her book project.

A textbook for librarians and library administrators

"I do not believe that there is a single librarian who would want to have something *not* be accessible", Clayton states. "But I think sometimes accessibility barriers are born out of a lack of awareness and understanding what needs are".

To work against these deficits, 'Disabilities and the Library' provides tools and resources to help foster increased awareness and knowledge among various stakeholders, e. g. pre-professional and practicing librarians, library administrators, and the families of differently abled patrons. The contributions, nearly all of which are written by people with disabilities, help readers understand the challenges faced by people who are differently abled, both as patrons and as information professionals.

The volume is divided into six parts. The first part gives an introduction on disability rights, universal access and universal design. Part two helps readers to understand differences by providing information on dyslexia, blindness and other reading disabilities, deafness, and further conditions. The third part suggests various methods and steps for creating inclusive collections and programming. The next two sections address library management and HR staff, to whom inclusive hiring practices are suggested, followed by a conclusion.

Voices of lived experience

And who are the contributors? The book project came into life when Clayton was asked by the publisher to write a book on accessibility. Then the idea came about for it to be an edited volume and incorporate different perspectives. Clayton wanted authors "who are the really premier experts in an area or specialization, to share their experience and share their knowledge". Most of the contributors have personally lived experiences with disabilities, which they drew from, including the editor herself who relies on a walking aid. She drew on an existing network of people which grew during the process.

**What libraries should do**

According to Clayton, libraries should "have a desire and a willingness to learn and to include people with disabilities in their accessibility efforts". Accessibility needs to be integrated into the missions, visions, policies and library documents, and has to become part of the organisational culture and value. Instead of separate efforts, a

continuous circle is required. Advisory boards should be more diverse and include voices of lived experience in the planning of programs and services planning, and their evaluation.

Accessibility is a continuous journey

"Continuing to strengthen accessibility and usability - and thereby access to information", Clayton points out, "is an ongoing journey". New voices will contribute to a new or a follow-up edition of this amazing book.

Clayton A. Copeland (Ed.), 'Disabilities and the Library. Fostering Equity for Patrons and Staff with Differing Abilities'. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2022
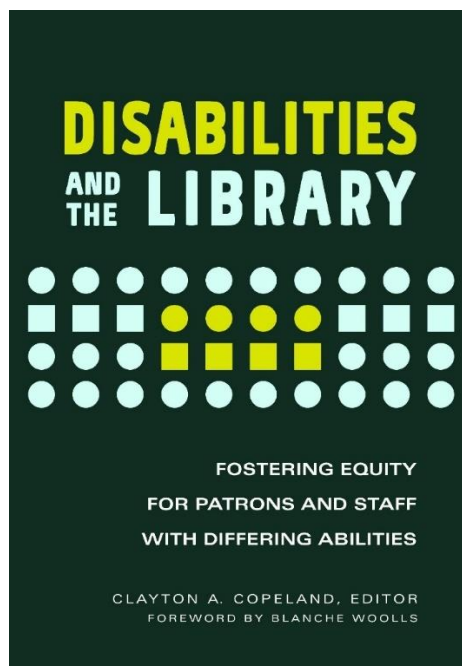
Description picture: cover book 'Disabilities and the Library. Fostering equity for Patrons and Staff with Differing Abilities', edited by Clayton A. Copeland.

By Corinna Haas (Head of Library, The German Centre of Gerontology, Germany) and Clayton A. Copeland (Instructor and Director, Laboratory for Leadership in Equity and Diversity School of Information Science, University of South Carolina, United States of America)
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3.5 ChatGPT: AI based assistive tools for people with disabilities

In the last two decades, the rapid advancement in technologies, mainly AI (Artificial Intelligence)-based digital solutions, have inevitably changed human life. These applications with high computation power have benefited and eased all sectors like education, banking, tourism, healthcare, governance, agriculture, food, etc. Academic and research writing have seen opportunities in the technologies. Recently, a web-based platform called ChatGPT was launched by OpenAI on 30th November 2022. It is an AI (Artificial Intelligence)-embedded conversational tool that facilitates intelligent

dialogue between computers and humans in natural language. It processes all types of queries and responds with the desired output. It received more than 1 million registrations within a week after its launch, which is the highest for any digital platform. The URL of ChatGPT is https://chat.openai.com. Anyone with a valid email address and mobile phone number can register on the portal. The interactions can be started by typing the text in the rectangular box chat panel at the page's bottom. Many day-to-day queries were tested on the Chatbot, and it answered them very intelligently, like the human responses. It could handle simple to complex queries even in regional languages. It can be an assistive tool for people with disabilities to access information on various subjects. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities mandates that people with disabilities can access information independently. Further, steps must be taken to identify and eliminate the barriers that create hurdles in accessing the information. The present version of ChatGPT can facilitate people with disabilities who have speech disorders or have difficulties speaking or deaf, hard of hearing persons. They can write down their information requirement in the ChatGPT and get the desired results. It differs from the search engine like Google, which provides the hyperlink to the resource containing information on the web. In ChatGPT, people will get the complete information in textual format.

At present, it cannot benefit other people with disabilities like the people who are blind, have low vision or are otherwise print disabled. But in the near future, the organization OpenAI may develop add-on speech and hearing features like Siri and Alexa. This way, it will be an assistive platform that enables people with disabilities to access information anytime from anywhere.

By Priya Rangra (Scholar, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, India)

4. Let's work together! Let's library for all!
Call for papers IFLA WLIC 2023 Satellite meeting by LPD (18-19 August 2023, Schiedam, The Netherlands)

An announcement from our colleagues from the LPD section ('Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities').

Let's work together! Let's library *for all*!
Call for papers IFLA WLIC 2023 Satellite meeting

From 21 to 25 August 2023, the IFLA 'World Library and Information Congress' (WLIC) will take place in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

'Let's work together! Let's library!', is the overall theme, a rewarding one that leaves much room for interesting and inspiring interpretations.

IFLA consists of several divisions, sections and interest groups. These groups regularly organise pre- and post-conferences surrounding the WLIC.

The 'Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities' (LPD) Standing Committee will host a pre-conference.
This year's Satellite Conference will take place on 18 and 19 August at Korenbeurs in Schiedam, near Rotterdam.
The LPD standing committee, KB, Dedicon, Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen and Luisterpuntbibliotheek are working on the programme.

The meeting language is English.

We use the overall WLIC theme and focus on inclusivity:
Let's work together! Let's library *for all*!

The focal point is the integration of library services for persons with print disabilities in the public library.

To build an interesting programme, we are launching an open call for papers.

We invite you to share how you are making your library an accessible and inclusive place for all users. How can we all collaborate? We would like to hear in what ways and with which organisations or libraries you cooperate to achieve inclusive library services.

We are curious to hear your inspiration and ideas, your positive experiences, as well as the pitfalls and obstacles.

The full call for papers, with guidelines and deadline, can be found at
https://2023.ifla.org/cfp-calls-libraries-with-print-disabilities.

Proposals should be sent to lpd-satellite@dedicon.nl.

Thank you in advance! And see you in Schiedam!

5. Presentation of the new section members

Farah Sbeity. Lecturer, Lebanese University, Lebanon.

Mohd Faizal Hamzah. Senior Librarian, University of Malaya, Malaysia.

Olanike Alabi. Senior Librarian, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Priya Rangra. Scholar, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, India.

6. Colophon and contact

LSN Newsletter February 2023

Editorial board: Diego Anthoons, Corinna Haas, Janet Lee, Priya Rangra, Maela Rakočević Uvodić

More information about our section: www.ifla.org/units/lsn/

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