

Preface

Open access to the world's scientific and technological information is a worthy goal for the library profession. The users of our libraries require timely and affordable access to the information they need to frame their research questions, devise their approaches and verify their results. They both consume and produce the scientific and technological information. As librarians, we must facilitate both of these functions. Open access is one vital approach.

The IFLA Science and Technology Libraries Section recognizes the challenge of providing equitable access to information. Our role is to support science and technology librarians, and by so doing, the users of their libraries. The section tracks and responds to current challenges relevant to librarians working with the physical sciences, engineering and technology. Activities include monitoring the dynamic environment in the field, promoting discussions, as well as exploring and sharing best practices among members who serve in research, public, corporate and government libraries. Working with colleagues in developing nations is a high priority.

In the past two years, we have focused on elevating awareness of open access to scientific and technological information among our colleagues worldwide. The 2010 Satellite Workshop on Open Access to Science Information: Trends, Models and Strategies for Libraries provided an excellent forum to discuss the challenges of providing open access to information. The conversation was broad and resulted in a strong statement encouraging the IFLA Governing Board to investigate several factors when developing its stance on open access. These include the restrictive nature of many national copyright regimes, the wide variety of our libraries users' needs, and the complex relationship between information and learning.

The IFLA STL Section applauds the efforts of the workshop participants in articulating that an open society requires open access to information. Subsequent to the workshop, a Professional Resolution was submitted to the IFLA Professional Committee asking IFLA to clearly define its stance towards open access and to more actively advocate for strategies that promote open access. As the chair of the IFLA STL Section, I thank the Workshop participants and organizers for their thoughtful statement as this adds critical support for this important work of IFLA. Together, we will help create a more open society through better access to information.

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