



## Promoting Translational Research Within the Global Library and Information Community: Access to Research Dissemination, Promotion of Timely Issues, and Professional Development Through IFLA Journal

Steve Witt

### Abstract:

Within the global Library and Information Science profession there is often a disconnect between research and practice. IFLA Journal seeks to help bridge this gap through an editorial process and publishing mandate that encourages mixed methods approaches to research that engages librarians and their communities in the research and information dissemination process in order to translate research in a manner that helps to shape impactful professional practice and share outcomes with the wider profession. This article describes ways in which to engage IFLA Journal and participate in some of its ongoing professional development activities.

### To cite this article:

Witt, S. (2018). Promoting translational research within the global library and information community: Access to research dissemination, promotion of timely issues, and professional development through IFLA Journal. *International Journal of Librarianship*, 3(2), 103-108.

### To submit your article to this journal:

Go to <http://ojs.calaijol.org/index.php/ijol/about/submissions>

## **Promoting translational research within the global library and information community: access to research dissemination, promotion of timely issues, and professional development through IFLA Journal**

Steve Witt

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL, USA

### **ABSTRACT**

Within the global Library and Information Science profession there is often a disconnect between research and practice. *IFLA Journal* seeks to help bridge this gap through an editorial process and publishing mandate that encourages mixed methods approaches to research that engages librarians and their communities in the research and information dissemination process in order to translate research in a manner that helps to shape impactful professional practice and share outcomes with the wider profession. This article describes ways in which to engage *IFLA Journal* and participate in some of its ongoing professional development activities.

**Keywords:** translational research, library science, publishing, professional development

For over forty years, the editors of *IFLA Journal* have strived to publish articles that reflect the work and mission of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). As recounted by Jerry W. Mansfield, past chair of the Journal's editorial committee, the history of *IFLA Journal* sees a publication that has evolved from a chronicle of IFLA activities to a peer-reviewed journal that examines the challenges faced by librarians and information professionals that range from the investigating role of information in society, improving communities, developing inclusive services, supporting economic development, increasing access to knowledge, and actively engaging in the local and international policies that impact libraries and the world's population (Mansfield, 2014). The broad mandate of *IFLA Journal* requires a long-standing dedication to channeling the global voice of the library and information professions while promoting research that impacts practice. The success of *IFLA Journal* relies on the participation of practitioners and academics. This essay provides information on the scope of the journal and ways in which to engage the IFLA community through its scholarly journal.

If one reflects upon past publications and often cited articles from the journal, the diversity of authors, perspectives, and issues are unmatched within the field's literature. Reviewing some of the most frequently read articles that are featured on the journal's website, one sees the depth and breadth of the journal's coverage. Articles focus on topics that remain timely such as freedom of expression, cultural heritage, development, indigenous knowledge, building leadership within the

profession, and perspectives from around the globe that inform our professional practice. Nakata's landmark article "Indigenous Knowledge and the Cultural Interface" continues to be one of the most read *IFLA Journal* papers while Koltay's contributions to our knowledge of data management practices breaks new ground in a pressing new professional initiative (Nakata, 2002; Koltay, 2016). These articles reflect the strength of the profession as a global field.

The important work to advocate the critical need for information access and the role of libraries and allied cultural organizations in facilitating knowledge production is predicated upon the availability of research and evidence from the field. The Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development, launched at the World Library and Information Congress 2014, marks a critical initiative to assert and advocate the role of the profession in cultures and societies around the world (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2014). Over 300 organizations from throughout the library and development community endorsed the document, calling upon United Nations Member States to integrate access to information into the post-2015 development framework. Declarations such as the one issued in Lyon in 2014 mark the ambitions and ideals of the library profession and successfully added the profession's voice to the important UN2030 conversations that will impact development initiatives for years to come (Bradley, 2016). Practitioners need access to both the tools and resources to translate their experience and the impact of their work to a wide and globally situated professional audience to make these initiatives successful. To contribute to the success of initiatives such as IFLA's work within the UN2030 Sustainable Development Goals, *IFLA Journal* aims to reflect the profession as a whole while ensuring a diversity of research methods, theoretical perspectives, and levels of inquiry that reflect the breadth and depth of IFLA's membership and remit.

One strategy *IFLA Journal* employs to reach the professional units that support IFLA's work is to partner with sections to develop topical and thematic special issues. The inaugural special issue of the journal focused on National Libraries as centered of innovation. Subsequent special issues focused on Cultural Heritage Preservation, Data Services, and Privacy (Cooke, 2018; Drijfhout & de Boer, 2015; Horstmann & Witt, 2017). In particular, the main goals of these special issues are to gather interdisciplinary and inter-professional research that contributes to professional practice and policy decisions that are important to the topics being addressed in global forums such as the UN. *IFLA Journal* focuses its special issues in a manner that encourages exchange between library researchers and practitioners and those from allied fields to inspire wider research that relates to practice and furthers dialogue with other professions ranging from archivists to urban planners.

Currently, *IFLA Journal* has open calls for two special issues that focus on challenges identified by professional sections. These include knowledge management, and information literacy.

### **Special Issue on Knowledge Management**

Managing institutional knowledge is increasingly recognized as a crucial element in improving competitiveness, innovation, and creativity. Libraries seeking to be resilient organizations in a quickly and unpredictably changing world know that KM is essential to their internal management strategy, and librarians in particular have the necessary skills and competencies to put it into action.

Libraries contribute to their parent institutions by helping them to develop their own approach to KM, providing them with methods and tools to address their own development, and transform themselves in a transforming world. As the number of knowledge workers increases in all sectors, practicing effective KM requires attention to human resources, a mature use of technologies and the ability to deploy effective processes.

*IFLA Journal* invites papers for a special issue focused on Knowledge Management across all continents. We intend to gather the latest theories, research, and practices from libraries and information professions to further the discourse on the current state of Knowledge Management in libraries and other information-rich institutions. We are particularly interested in articles employing quantitative or qualitative research methods in their approach to knowledge management.

**Guest Editors:**

**Leda Bultrini**

Operating Systems and Knowledge Management, Director  
ARPA Lazio (Regional Agency for Environment Prot.)  
Italy

**Wilda Newman**

Information Resources Manager  
Knowledge Resources Associates, LLC  
United States

**Mary Augusta Thomas**

Deputy Director  
Smithsonian Libraries  
United States

**Jennifer A. Bartlett**

Interim Associate Dean, Teaching, Learning, & Research Division University of  
Kentucky Libraries  
United States

**Submission Deadline:**

Articles for the special issue should be submitted to *IFLA Journal* for peer review on or before Friday, 19 April 2019.

### **Special Issue on Information Literacy:**

IFLA Journal and IFLA's Library Theory and Research (LTR) and Information Literacy (IL) Sections are soliciting articles for a special issue focusing on theory and practice in information literacy. With the potential to transform lives and societies, the importance of information literacy is appreciated world-wide. Our understandings of information literacy come from across the globe and ranges in focus from practice-based to highly theoretical; from everyday life to education and workplace settings; and for infants through to the elderly.

The Information Literacy special issue aims to examine a range of critical approaches and research models that contribute to building new theory; the challenges of applying theory in practice and how learning theories can inform practice. In particular, the main goal of the special issue is to explore how the body of information literacy practice can inform the building of theory, which in turn can inform future practice. It will also explore the potential for developing knowledge to guide information literacy practice across disciplines, contexts and environments.

#### **Guest Editors:**

##### **Dr. Gaby Haddow**

Libraries, Archives, Records & Information Science  
School of Media, Creative Arts & Social Inquiry  
Curtin University  
Australia

##### **Dr. Min Chou**

Congressman Frank J. Guarini Library  
New Jersey City University  
United States

#### **Submission Deadline:**

*Articles for the special issue should be submitted to IFLA Journal for peer review before **June 30 2019**.*

### **Training Libraries in Translational Research**

In addition to special issues, the journal seeks to work within the association's professional bodies to promote research and publishing that engages the diversity of the profession and speaks to the multiple challenges librarians face. To channel the global nature of IFLA's membership, the journal encourages wider collaboration and networking throughout IFLA that will inspire research and scholarship on topics important to the profession. One of the strengths of IFLA is that it brings together librarians from varied perspectives and backgrounds to discuss professional matters and advocate important issues. By encouraging and facilitating collaborative research among colleagues within IFLA, the profession will benefit by increasing access to publishing

opportunities among members while raising the level of the research and scholarship published in the journal.

The journal seeks to increase IFLA members' access to research tools and expertise to enable further efforts towards translational research. Librarians are increasingly being called upon to be researchers within their organizational and community settings. This research allows librarians to take an evidence based approach to identifying problems with local partners, measuring impact, and sharing the results of work to stakeholders and the broader profession.

Librarians often conduct studies in community settings and apply for grants that require documentation of real-world impact. Many funders require components such as dissemination plans, stakeholder engagement, or community participation. To meet these demands, librarians need to be able to understand and adopt research methods that will allow them to work with their communities to craft research questions and interpret project results to inform practice and policy. Working with the Social Science Libraries Section, IFLA Journal plans to develop a series of workshops that introduce participants to methods for conducting research in real-world settings and translating empirical findings to both practice and publishable results.

These workshops will introduce students to methods and tools to equip them to design, conduct, and critique qualitative and mixed methods research. Participants will explore the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of data collection methods and evaluate strategies for using and combining them. The workshop will focus on research designs that encourage community participation and that incorporate in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys, participant observation, and archival research. The majority of the workshop will focus on issues of research design and data collection to allow participants to design projects and community programs in a manner that will allow quality assessment and analysis to disseminate results to stakeholders and the broader professional community. The IFLA Journal editorial committee hopes to host its inaugural workshop at the WLIC 2019 meeting in Athens, Greece. We also look forward to partnering with other organizations to host and conduct similar events.

As *IFLA Journal* continues to evolve, the editor and editorial committee seek your input and collaboration. There are multiple ways in which to engage the journal and publishing process beyond submitting research. From opportunities to edit a special issue to professional development and even serving on the journal editorial committee, the journal strives to reach the global library and information science community through both its publishing mandate and vision to make research and publishing opportunities more accessible to the IFLA membership and field globally.

## References

- Bradley, F. (2016). 'A world with universal literacy.' *IFLA Journal*, 42(2), 118–125.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035216647393>
- Cooke, L. (2018). Privacy, libraries and the era of big data. *IFLA Journal*, 44(3), 167–169.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035218789601>
- Drijfhout, D., & de Boer, T. (2015). IFLA Journal special issue on Cultural Heritage. *IFLA Journal*, 41(3), 191–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035215604316>

- Horstmann, W., & Witt, M. (2017). Libraries tackle the challenge of research data management. *IFLA Journal*, 43(1), 3–4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035216688787>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. (2014). The Lyon Declaration. Retrieved December 7, 2018, from <https://www.lyondeclaration.org/>
- Koltay, T. (2016). Data governance, data literacy and the management of data quality. *IFLA Journal*, 42(4), 303–312. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035216672238>
- Mansfield, J. W. (2014). A brief history of the IFLA Journal. *IFLA Journal*, 40(4), 237–239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035214554169>
- Nakata, M. (2002). Indigenous Knowledge and the Cultural Interface: underlying issues at the intersection of knowledge and information systems. *IFLA Journal*, 28(5–6), 281–291. <https://doi.org/10.1177/034003520202800513>
- 

### **About the author**

Dr. Steve Witt is an Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he is the Head of the International and Area Studies Library, Director of the Center for Global Studies, and Japanese Studies subject specialist. Professor Witt is also the Editor of IFLA Journal. His research focuses on the trajectory and impacts of international developments in library and information science, placing global trends in librarianship and knowledge production in the context of wider social and technological developments.