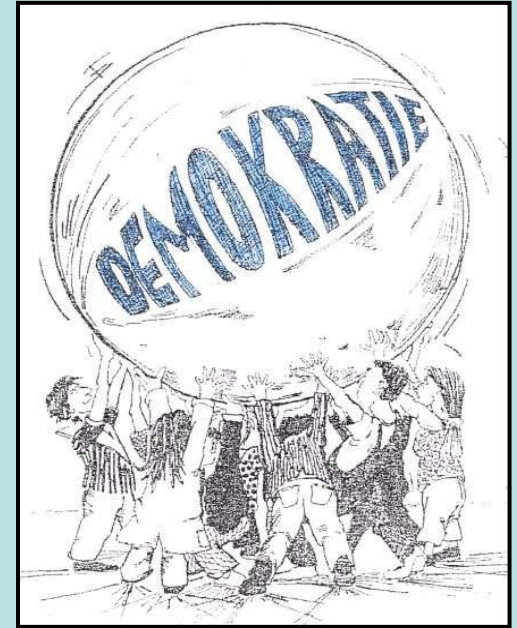




Libraries and Democracy



The Role of Libraries in Democratic Societies

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Overview

Introduction

Main Functions of Libraries in regard to democratic society

Educational Functions

Social Functions

Political Functions

Informational Functions

Organizational Requirements for Libraries:

Libraries as a system

Two Examples:

Germany Reads

IFLA/FAIFE: Internet Manifesto; Manifesto on Transparency...



Potential of libraries to advocate democratic principles:

Libraries

- o **collect and provide access to information**
- o **serve as common memory of societies and nations**
- o **enable users to verify statements**
- o **facilitate readers to reconstruct the past**
- o **provide access to information about scientific findings, technological expertise and economic understanding**

Francis Bacon (1561-1621): *Knowledge is Power*



Libraries

- o serve those who govern*
- o enable the public to control those who govern*
- o facilitate political participation of citizens*
- o provide the means for cultural evolvement of individuals*

Main Functions of Libraries

- **Educational** Functions
 - General Education
 - Industrial Training
 - Literacy and Information Literacy
- **Social** Functions
 - Inclusion of Minorities
 - Emancipation of Disadvantaged Social Strata
- **Political** Functions
 - Unbiased Information
 - Political Participation
 - Transparency and Anti-Corruption
 - E-Government and E-Democracy
 - Maintenance of National Heritage and National Memory
- **Informational** Functions
 - Free Access to Information
 - Democratization of Scientific Information
 - Connection to the Global World of Information



Educational Functions

General Education

- o *General education as precondition of human liberation (Kant) and democratic society*
- o *Superstition and oppression have to be overcome by reason*
- o *General education through access to information*
- o *Public libraries emerge as an instrument of enlightenment and the rise of the bourgeoisie*
- ⇒ *Well developed and highly used Public Libraries are a firm proof of a robust democracy*
- ⇒ *And they are a precondition of democracy as well*

Educational Functions

Industrial Training

- o *The overcoming of class society claims **vertical mobility** as an option for every citizen*
- ⇒ *Libraries as career counselors*
- ⇒ *Libraries have to provide books which enable readers to get a general idea of all the possibilities of education and further education existing*
- ⇒ *Libraries have to provide material of all kind needed to successfully complete a professional training*
- ⇒ *Libraries support vertical mobility*
- ⇒ *Libraries support people's own initiative to improve their social position and their social standing*

Educational Functions

Literacy and Information Literacy (1)

- o *Information Society: based on digital media and the Internet*
- o *Globalisation and continuous acceleration as characteristics of the information society*
- o *Old model of education is outdated*
- o *New model of education: **lifelong learning***
- o *Lifelong learning affords two skills: **learn how to learn** and **information literacy***
- o *Literacy remains a precondition of information literacy*

Educational Functions

Literacy and Information Literacy (2)

- *Information Literacy: „A person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the availability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.“ (ALA)*
- *Aspects of information literacy: information seeking strategies, location of sources, extraction of information, appropriate use of information, ability to format and publish research and ideas electronically*
- ⇒ *Libraires have been concerned with „simple“ literacy for a long time*
- ⇒ *Libraries evolve into „**Teaching Libraries**“*



Social Functions

Inclusion of Minorities

- *Modern societies are shaped by migration and immigration*
- *Many societies are multicultural in principle*
- ⇒ *The first public libraries emerge in traditional immigration countries*
- ⇒ *Libraries support minorities to maintain their **cultural identity***
- ⇒ *Libraries facilitate **social inclusion of minorities***
- ⇒ *Libraires help to find the balance between **cultural diversity and social inclusion***



Social Functions

Emancipation of Disadvantaged Social Stratum

- o Democratic societies aspire to **bear down caste and class barriers**
- o To improve chances of **social advancement** appears to be an everlasting task
 - ⇒ Libraries have to invite underprivileged classes to use the library
 - ⇒ Libraries have to develop appropriate strategies addressed to the needs of these customers
 - ⇒ Libraries should **cooperate with pressure groups and representatives** of relevant groupings
 - ⇒ Libraries do not only support **individuals** but **social groupings** to move into the centre of the society



Political Functions

Provision of Unbiased Information (1)

- o *Information rarely is neutral*
- o **Pluralism** is a cornerstone of democracy
- o *No single person and no political party are able to announce the ultimate truth*
- o *Democracy is based on a **competition of ideas and arguments***
- o *Democracy involves a never ending **struggle for majorities***
- ⇒ **Libraries are collecting information which tends to be biased**
- ⇒ **The collection itself should be unbiased**
- ⇒ *Libraries have to build collections without any restrictions*
- ⇒ **Libraries have to guarantee a pluralism of opinions**

Political Functions

Provision of Unbiased Information (2)

- ***Scientific progress relies on fundamental doubt and a constant competition of paradigms, conceptions and methods***
- ⇒ ***Academic libraries have to collect information and publications of opposing research communities***

Political Functions

Political Participation

- o *True democracy is based on **civil society** and **participation***
- o *Civil Society is shaped by **continous debates** and **controversial discussions***
- o ***Freedom of expression** as basic right*
- o *A well informed citizenry will make better voting choices, will participate and hold the government more accountable*
- o *People will form and join syndicates, social movements, self-help groups trade unions or advocacy groups*
- ⇒ *Libraries collect controversial information*
- ⇒ *Libraries provide **free access** to their collections*
- ⇒ *Libraries enable **all parts** of society to **become well informed***

Transparency and Anti-Corruption

- *Democracies are at risk to become abused if decisions are taken behind locked doors*
- *Fundamental openness and full knowledge of decision making is necessary are necessary for public control of governmental power*
- **Transparency is the basis of good governance and the fight against corruption**
- ⇒ *Libraries support transparency and anti-corruption by **providing free access to all relevant information and government documents***
- ⇒ *Libraries contribute to good **governance** by informing citizens of their rights and entitlements*
- ⇒ *Libraries **support citizens' advice centres** provided by anti-corruption NGOs*

Political Functions

E-Government and E-Democracy (1)

- o *E-Government/E-Democracy refer to the **use of information and communication technology** to provide **government services, transactions and interactions** with citizens*
- o *Government agencies can **push information** over the **Internet***
- o *Citizens can engage in **dialogue with government agencies** and post problems, comments or requests*
- o *Fundamental acts of governance like **online polling, voting and campaigning** can be conducted **via Internet***

Political Functions

E-Government and E-Democracy (2)

- o *E-Government/E-Democracy promise to have a potential to **increase political Partizipation**, and to create a **more transparent government***
- ⇒ *Libraries provide **access to e-government and e-democracy for everybody***
- ⇒ *They thus **bridge the digital divide***
- ⇒ *Librarians maintain **link lists, web catalogues** and other legitimate web sources related to e-government and e-democracy*

Political Functions

Maintenance of National Heritage (1)

- o *A nation's collective memory consists of **communicative memory** and **cultural memory***
- o **Communicative** memory:
everyday memory; situated in the **present**; very **limited**
- o **Cultural** memory:
long-term storage of **huge amounts** of relevant information; needs authoritative repositories
- o **Collective memory** based on an expanded cultural memory enables to form and to preserve **national and cultural identity**

Political Functions

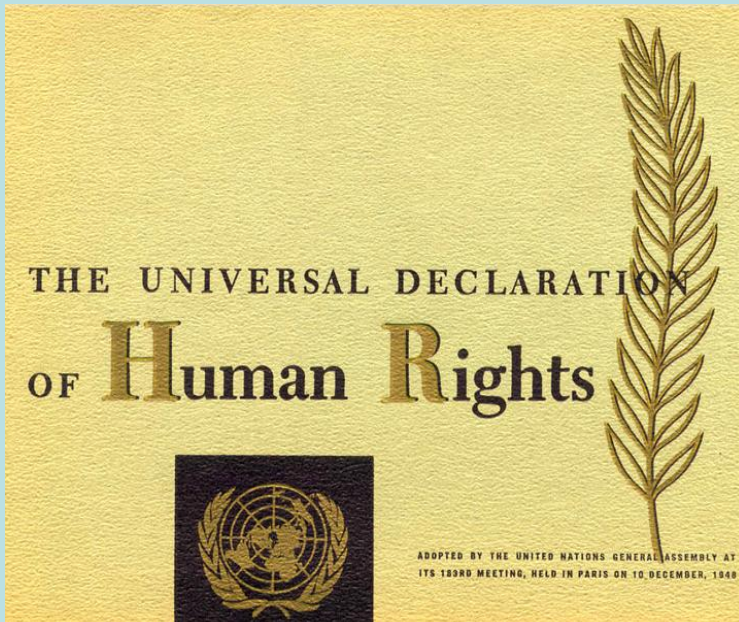
Maintenance of National Heritage (2)

- ⇒ *In collaboration with archives and museums **libraries** in particular are **predestigned to preserve** and to **maintain** a nation's **cultural memory***
- ⇒ ***Cultural memory** should **include** not only traces of the ruling class and culture but of **all parts and sectors of society***
- ⇒ *Democratic society requires the **full inclusion** of **ethnical, social, cultural and religious minorities** within national heritage and collective memory*
- ⇒ *National libraries, regional, local and academic libraries are involved in the task of preserving and maintaining a representative and well developed collective memory*



Informational Functions

Free Access to Information (1)



“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19

Informational Functions

Free Access to Information (2)

- o *Free access to information without any restrictions*
 - facilitates **political participation**
 - enhances citizen's **control of governments**
 - improves **transparency** and the fight against corruption
- ⇒ *The **library** is the **only agency** in society that makes **knowledge, idea and information freely available** for all citizens*
- ⇒ *Thus **libraires** make a basic contribution to **bridge social divides** and to **democratize access to information** and high quality information in particular*

Informational Functions

Democratization of Scientific Information (1)

- o *Democratization of Scientific Information is a special case of free access*
- o *Scientific Information is of particular importance not only for **scholars** but **for citizens as well***
- o *Scientific Information **affects economy, politics, ethics and society's whole welfare***
- o *Scientific work has be **controlled by the public** and should not be restricted to serve enterprises or particular interests*

Informational Functions

Democratization of Scientific Information (2)

- o ***Scholars need open access to the whole cosmos of academic knowledge***
 - o *Transparency is needed to **facilitate social recognition** and accountability of scholars who did the research*
 - o ***Independant scholars** must get the opportunity to **confirm, modify or falsify findings***
- ⇒ ***Academic libraries** are in charge to provide access to academic knowledge for scholars and citizens*

Informational Functions

Connection to the Global World of Information (1)

- o *The Internet as basic infrastructure is not yet accessible for all parts of society*
- ⇒ *Libraries **provide access** to the global world of information for everybody*
- ⇒ *Libraries thus facilitate independant opinion making*
- ⇒ *Libraries produce link lists, web directories, subject gateways, virtual libraries and library portals*
- ⇒ *Libraries provide access to quality controlled web resurces*
- ⇒ *Academic libraries are in charge to provide access to academic knowledge for scholars and citizens*

Informational Functions

Connection to the Global World of Information (2)

- o **Open Access** publishing seems to become the leading concept of academic publishing
- o 10 - 15 % of peer reviewed scholarly journals are already Open Access
(cf. DOAJ, Directory of Open Access Journals)
- o Universities assemble „Institutional Repositories“, where they provide access to their intellectual output
(cf. ROAR, Registry of Open Access Repositories)
- ⇒ Academic libraires should promote OA-movement
- ⇒ Academic libraries should bridge the gap between scientific communities of different countries and continents



Organizational Requirements for Libraries (1)

- ⇒ **No single library is able to meet the variety of tasks libraries are facing in a vivid democratic society**
- ⇒ **Libraries have to cooperate and to develop networks**
- ⇒ **Libraries have to specialize and to build a system based on division of labor**
- ⇒ **Fields of cooperation are e.g.:
collection building, shared cataloguing, union catalogues, cooperative subject indexing, interlibrary loan, reference, development of information services...**
- ⇒ **Patrons should perceive their local library as an entry point to an advanced system of libraries with an ambitious range of professional services**



Organizational Requirements for Libraries (2)

If libraries are accepted as important institutions

- to support democracy***
- to strengthen self-confidence of citizens and***
- to promote academic progress***

⇒ Librarians have to be highly skilled and to be educated thoroughly

Organizational Requirements for Libraries (3)

Library education programs should impart at least

- o **Customized collection development and information brokerage**
- o **Long-term preservation, supply of media and information**
- o **Application oriented indexing of information**
- o **Development, design and evaluation of customer-oriented reference and information services**
- o **Management of libraries and related information institutions**
- o **Application of information technologies**

Examples (1)

Germany Reads. The Library as a Meeting Point

<http://www.treffpunkt-bibliothek.de/>

- o National campaign for one week
- o The German President as patron of the campaign
- o Celebrities as supporters
- o Libraires of all kind present exhibitions, readings, library talks etc.
- o Libraries introduce their activities: e.g. information literacy, further education, activities targeted to minorities etc.
- o 2008: 4.500 presentations in more than 1.000 places



DEUTSCHLAND LIEST TREFFPUNKT BIBLIOTHEK

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WILLKOMMEN!

Deutschland liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek 6. November - 13. November 2009

Unter der Schirmherrschaft von Bundespräsident Horst Köhler

Bereits zum zweiten Mal starten Bibliotheken in ganz Deutschland in Kooperation mit dem Deutschen Bibliotheksverband e.V. (dbv) eine einwöchige bundesweite Aktionswoche unter dem Motto "Deutschland liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek".

In der Woche vom 6.-13. November 2009 präsentieren sie sich erneut gemeinsam in der Öffentlichkeit als Partner für Lesen, Informations- und Medienkompetenz sowie Weiterbildung: mit Lesungen, Events, Vorlesestunden, Bibliotheksnächten und vielen weiteren Aktionen.

Die Kampagne wird erstmals in Verbindung mit dem bundesweiten Vorlesestag am 13. November, dem letzten Tag der Aktionswoche, organisiert.

Der dbv unterstützt die Bibliotheken mit Plakaten, Lesezeichen und Einladungskarten in einheitlichem Design, mit Öffentlichkeitsarbeit in überregionalen Medien und mit der Kampagnenwebsite und dem zentralen Veranstaltungskalender.

[› Lesen Sie mehr](#)

Noch						
168 Tag(e) bis zum 6. November						
Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr	Sa	So
				6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13		



Der Bundespräsident

"Meine Meinung ist: Bibliotheken gehören [...] in Deutschland auf die



Examples (2)

International Federation of Library Associations / Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression

IFLA/FAIFE <http://www.ifla.org/faife/>

- o Internet-Manifesto
- o Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption



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IFLA Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption

Author:

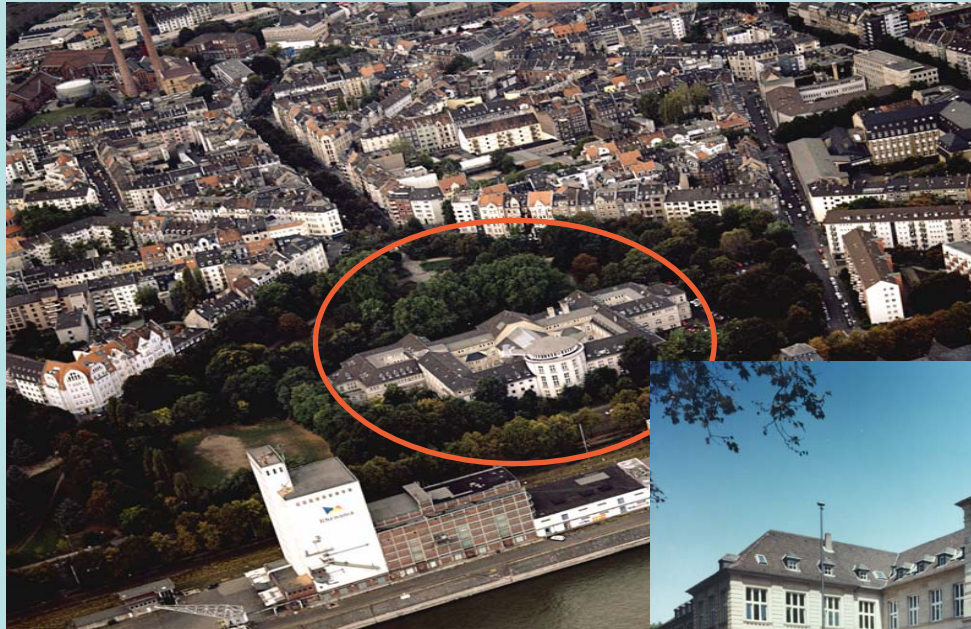
FAIFE

Also available in [Greek](#)

Endorsed by IFLA Governing Board, 3 December 2008

IFLA has on numerous occasions and in many forums made clear its belief in the positive role of libraries in society and its commitment to enhancing this role. It has consistently linked this to the principle of Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, as set out in Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.





Thank you very much !

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