

Revised 2014 IFLA Internet Manifesto

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Preamble:

Library and information services are vibrant institutions, connecting people with global and local resources. Libraries provide access to ideas and creative works, opening access to the richness of expressive diversity. The Internet enables individuals and communities of all sizes and affluence to have greater equality of access to information, supporting personal development, education, cultural enrichment, economic activity, and access to government and other services. The Internet helps inform active citizens about their participation in a democratic society. The Internet creates opportunities for all to share their ideas, interests, and culture globally. Library and information services aim to be essential gateways to resources and services via the Internet. Libraries ought to act as access points, offering convenience, guidance, and support while aiding to overcome barriers created by differences in resources, technology, and skills.

1. Freedoms of expression and access to information are essential to equality, global understanding, and peace. Therefore, IFLA asserts that:

1.1 The primary responsibility of the library and information profession is to support forms of expression via access to information in communities, regardless of format or frontiers.

1.2 Access to the Internet and all its resources ought to be consistent with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 19:

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

1.3 Remove barriers to the flow of information, especially those that prevent individuals from opportunities that improve their quality of life. An open Internet is essential, and access to information and freedom of expression ought not to be subject to ideological, political, or religious censorship or economic or technological barriers.

2. The role and responsibilities of library and information services in providing Internet access

2.1 Library and information services have a vital role in ensuring the freedom of access to information and expression; they are responsible to:

- serve all members of their communities, regardless of age, race, nationality, religion, culture, political affiliation, physical or mental abilities, gender or sexual orientation, or other statuses.
- provide access to the Internet in an appropriate environment for all members of their communities.

- support users of all ages to ensure they have the media and information literacy competencies needed to use their chosen information resources freely, confidently, and independently as able.
- support the right of users to both seek and share information.
- strive to ensure the privacy of their users. The resources and services that they use remain confidential.
- facilitate and promote intellectual, cultural, and economic creativity through access to the Internet, its resources, and services.

2.2 In allowable spaces where young people use library facilities, libraries should post a clear policy on using the Internet by children and minors. This policy should be explained to parents when children first use the facilities. These policies should restrict youth access to the Internet as minimally as possible.

2.3 To match other core services of library and information services, access to the Internet and related technologies ought to be without charge.

2.4 Libraries should prioritize offering the best, user-friendly technology when selecting hardware and software.

2.5 Training should be provided for Internet usage that accounts for the particular needs of first-time users, disabled users, elderly users, and children in Internet information-seeking endeavors.

3 The role and responsibilities of library and information services in adding Internet content

3.1 Librarians should identify, facilitate, and promote locally produced and relevant information content. They should also, when possible, work in cooperation with local information producers in the production of local content.

3.2 Librarians should encourage dialogue among cultures and respect for indigenous peoples. Furthermore, their languages, seeking to facilitate access to content in local languages, expand beyond communities and strengthen neighborhoods.

3.3 Librarians should recognize traditional oral knowledge as a critical community-generated social good. As a result, local content should get access to a broader audience.

open 3.4 While respecting existing intellectual property rights, librarians should encourage access approaches to the provision of local content, based on creative commons principles.

3.5 Librarians should seek to develop programs to digitize the library's resources of unique content.

3.6 Libraries should seek to make their catalogs available online and facilitate access to local content through new or existing library-managed portals and web pages.

4 Implementing the Manifesto

4.1 IFLA encourages all governments to support the unhindered flow of Internet-accessible information and freedom of expression, ensure openness and transparency by opposing the attempts to censor or inhibit access, and ensure that surveillance and data collection are demonstrably legal, necessary, and proportionate.

4.2 IFLA calls upon library and information services to work with states, governments, religious and civil society institutions to develop strategic policies and plans that support and implement the principles expressed in this manifesto. Knowledge transfer and sharing can flourish by developing public access to the Internet in libraries and information service sectors worldwide, especially in developing countries.

4.3 When the law requires libraries to filter Internet content, librarians should seek to apply the lowest possible blocking levels. Libraries ought to adjust the parameters and levels of filtering. Library staff should clearly inform users of its presence and that they can challenge particular instances of blocking or request a change of blocking criteria.

4.4 Librarians will keep no more records of Internet use than is required by law, nor shall they retain such records for longer than is required, always protecting the integrity of user's rights.

Commentary of our Changes

When looking at the IFLA Internet Manifesto, we noticed gaps in real-life challenges, especially in ways to take action that best protect the public and serve libraries' missions to be avenues for information sharing and gathering. Instead of acting as an actionable document with a clear ethical goal, we found much of the language to be naturally descriptive or hopeful about what an easily accessible Internet information portal resembles rather than effectively using ethical frameworks such as deontology and contractualism. These issues are present in both the original 2002 document and the most recent version in 2014 and we have focused our efforts on updating the latter for this project. Positive rights claimed for the public are that access to information improves lives, creates liberties, and allows for prosperity. Yet, there are negative outcomes when no specific measures on how to achieve these rights are detailed. Therefore, in revising it, we looked to the IFLA's history, mission and vision statements, and our knowledge of libraries—particularly in the public sector—to create a document that better guides librarians in their decision-making to offer free Internet in their spaces for users to explore.

We found that the IFLA Internet Manifesto Guidelines are a tremendous resource and we used it to improve the Manifesto (IFLA, 2006). Most of the statements in the Internet Manifesto are constructive - for the good of all people, presenting the Internet as an essential means to gain and share information. This creates a utility. To better support that goal, we aimed to echo the interests stated in the Children Internet Protection Act (CIPA) to protect youth accessing the Internet (Consumer, 2020). The ideas in CIPA are present in the 2002 and 2014 Internet Manifestos, but neither document gives the nod to the practices stated in the law. Our revised Internet Manifesto harmonizes the goals set forth by finding the common elements of the

existing IFLA Internet Manifestos, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ALA's Bill of Rights, and CIPA laws. We did this while also honoring our shared professional goals of an accessible Internet: one that recognizes the need to make the Internet accessible for all ages, all disabilities, all generational gaps, and despite the digital divide that privileges Internet access to higher classes.

The core values of the IFLA are on full display in the two iterations of their Internet Manifestos. In 2002, the first version was published and highlighted the importance of unhindered Internet access to support human expression (IFLA, 2002). Unfortunately, the 2002 Manifesto fell short by casting broad goals on how to implement those values. The 2002 Manifesto should have provided more context into why the IFLA felt compelled to make such recommendations for libraries at that time. The 2006 Internet Manifesto Guidelines bolstered interpretations written in the 2002 Manifesto (IFLA 2006). We found those guidelines incredibly insightful when preparing this revision. By 2014, a second, more modern version was released. The 2014 Manifesto expands upon libraries' roles in defining themselves as an Internet access portal that offers minimal barriers to technology, literacy, accessibility, and safe spaces to explore and share ideas online (International, 2014).

We felt that Section 1 of the 2014 Internet Manifesto served as bulleted statements of intent that introduced the rest of the document, not as legitimate guidelines that directed action. Therefore, taking the themes from Section 1, we wrote a Preamble that now summarizes what the IFLA Internet Manifesto has sought to accomplish. The substantiated claims provide access and remove barriers brought by finances, the individuals literacy level, available hardware, and physical capabilities when using devices to search for information or post content on the Internet. Other changes were in words used, focusing on a common language that is more easily

interpreted by librarians instituting the guidelines established by the IFLA. This change should help promote clarity for libraries updating their existing Internet policies.

In the new Section 1, the 2014 IFLA Internet Manifesto's original Section 2, we detail that all people should have freedoms when accessing and using the Internet. The IFLA places great emphasis on removing barriers to gaining information, mainly via the Internet, similar to Article I. of the ALA Bill of Rights (Admin, 2020). Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights influenced the sentiment and values declared by the IFLA. However, removing said barriers will be different in each community and needs to reflect the unique needs of the people those local libraries serve. We feel it is vital to keep Article 19 in the IFLA Internet Manifesto because it highlights libraries' legitimate roles in their communities. The Internet is a robust platform that continues to expand and connect the world (United 2015). The IFLA nods to documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, bringing renewed focus to review what libraries are doing, what the community members need, and where improvements are developing. Perhaps the IFLA specifically doesn't mention the ALA because it wants to remain a neutral global library influencer and not show any favoritism toward the United States.

For Section 2, the former Section 3 of the 2014 IFLA Internet Manifesto, we have added two sub-points to clarify libraries' actionable roles to strengthen their communities via providing access to the Internet. This area is where the ethical claims start to shine in the document, creating a utility for common rights, that information is valuable, and needs to be accessible for all. For example, sub-point 2.4 focuses on offering the best user-friendly technology. Crystal and Sloane work for the Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ). In our library system, we have seen this emphasis put into action. As better stewards of taxpayer dollars,

SCLSNJ changed our hardware to mirror commonly found technology in our community member's homes—Chrome devices using cloud storage (Loomis, 2021). Changing our platform took considerable training for the staff, but familiarity was built into the design as the technology is like Android and Apple iOS platforms. In addition, as our colleagues assist the public with technology literacy, specifically saving their created files, posting to the Internet, and managing their accounts, we have an inherent advantage in teaching the public the very services we use in the workplace. Such practices support sub-point 2.5 in our updated version of the 2014 Internet Manifesto.

While the 2014 Internet Manifesto focused on making the Internet an accessible, free, and uncensored entity for the patrons, it does not establish any standards for how librarians and libraries are responsible for adding content to the Internet. Ameliorating this was the core intent behind the “Content” section of the Internet Manifesto Guidelines document found on page 21 (IFLA, 2006). We felt this intent was essential to include in our new version of the Manifesto. It recognizes that the Internet is not just a service for consumption, but the information and content must be built and nurtured. Thus, we created a new Section 3. Our new sub-points are either plain language or paraphrased from the Internet Manifesto Guidelines document. Sub-points 3.1-3.4 all pertain to the fact that libraries are parts of their community. The guidelines here state outright that libraries should collect that information, especially from disenfranchised voices (sub-points 3.1-3.3), and recognize the standards and wishes of those with that knowledge on whether and how it gets published (sub-point 3.4). Sub-points 3.5 and 3.6 further press that this information should then go where it is accessible—on the Internet. By setting up a deontological standard for libraries to provide locally-accessed information on the Internet, libraries become responsible for making information accessible that might otherwise only be known by traveling

to that physical location. This shift embraces the ideals outlined in the previous two sections by ensuring that a variety of people from different backgrounds can access a fuller breadth of information they otherwise may not know exists.

Section 4 includes, first, two sub-points from the original 2014 document. The spirit of these sub-points is something we agree with, as working with the entities that have control over library policies is essential. Taking the values of a freely accessed and searchable Internet to governments and other ruling agencies ensures libraries do their best to maintain this freedom for the people they serve. However, as public library employees ourselves, we know libraries are not the only stakeholders in lawmaking. Sometimes, a law gets passed that goes against the standard foundations in our field. Therefore, we added sub-points 4.3 and 4.4, which are from the “Filtering” and “User Privacy” subsections of the Internet Manifesto Guidelines section on “Barriers” found on pages 24-26. These two sub-points acknowledge that governments and other interest groups might enact laws limiting free Internet exploration or encroaching on one’s privacy while publicly accessing the Internet. Here, stating that libraries should do the very minimum possible to follow that law establishes a compromise that allows the library to continue operating legally while following the intentions of the Manifesto as much as possible. In particular, the language around 4.3 about librarians and institutions keeping control of filtering content means that if a patron comes across a web resource caught in the filtering mechanisms by mistake, the library could allow the patron access rather than waiting for bureaucratic approval. These adjustments establish that even when faced with actions beyond the Manifesto’s ethics, there are still ways to respond that align themselves with the IFLA’s intent.

In conclusion, we foresee the Internet Manifesto taking a more assertive stance to eliminate the digital divide in future published IFLA iterations. For example, in our proposed

revision of Section 1, the IFLA can take action, detailing how social media has influenced communities. Social media has become a pillar of connectivity. As a result, libraries can better use social media tools to meet more specific populations. Using the Internet to collect local history narratives also creates a community database of familiar voices which builds tolerance and understanding in the neighborhoods our libraries serve. The Internet is an evolving space for ideas. The etiquette around best practices to share and retrieve information, provide access, and explore the platform is an arena that libraries should prioritize as an interest to stay relevant in their communities and as a field.

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