National information policy, information infrastructure and libraries

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Abstract

The current abstract is a preliminary report for defining and considering library role in information society policy and global information infrastructure development process.

Information dissemination and accessibility is underlying factor for sustainable economic, political, communal, and social development. Information policy affects all of us because without information, we don't function individually and definitely not as a society. The aim of the information society is to gain competitive advantage through using IT in a creative and productive way internationally. The information society produces enormous amount of information, information technologies enable to collect, store, archive information and access it at anytime and anywhere in modern ways. The information policy is determined as the set of rules, regulation and standards that controls the access to information for society. A concept is difficult to understand when it constantly is growing and evolving due to the information it covers and as we know information is always changing. Still, the national information policy is a key issue of culture, knowledge and information institutions.

Libraries are information institutions inherently. They play a key role as information pipeline. It is important carefully uphold the standards and policies which support its mission. In principle, library management policy should coincide with strategic national or international information society goals. However, libraries as creators of national information policy are less visible comparing with other cultural institutions.

In October 1998 the European Parliament adopted an initiative report "*The Roles of Libraries in Modern Society*", pointing out the library role "*as one of the key elements for open access to information, which is crucial to democratic information society development*"[1].

The European Commission undertook The Digital libraries initiative (DLI) in 2005 as part of the 2010 strategy to enhance the digital economy. Digital Agenda for Europe: Digital Libraries Initiative identifies seven priority action areas where creation of digital content and access to it remain among the EU priorities in the development of the information society.

IFLA Strategic Plan 2010-2015 stresses the goal which focuses on "*enabling libraries to increase awareness among decision makers of the key role libraries play in advancing the information and knowledge society*"[2].

The Professor of University of Malaysia, Zawiyah M. Yusof, divides information policy development issues into six groups: Technical and Scientific Information, Library, Information and communication technology (ICT), Social Issues, Government information, and Economy[3].

The fundamental part of any library's mission is preservation of our past, enhancement of the present and enrichment of the future. It includes issues like book access, digital archive, content distribution, national bibliography, foreign publication acquisition and ect. Basically library activities are based on information and communication technologies (ICT) that operate as integral part of information infrastructure. IT is driving force encouraging and stimulating information exchange for the future everywhere in the world. The close cooperation with IT sector, encourage libraries to renew

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[1] The Roles of Libraries in Modern Society: http://www.eblida.org/uploads/eblida/19/1258977707.pdf
[2] IFLA Strategic Plan 2010-2015: http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/gb/strategic-plan/2010-2015.pdf
[3] Classification of issues underlying the development of information policy: http://idv.sagepub.com/content/26/3/204.full.pdf+html

its services and processes under the prevalent worldwide tendencies. Libraries and ICT areas supporting each other shall be considered as the foundation that underlies information development policy.

The main aims contributing to information infrastructure development shall focus on:
- Creation of a new understanding of libraries as important actors in the knowledge and information policy
- Fulfilling library mission through the guidance of information policy (etc. "Electronic information policy for library users")
- Development of analytical tools to assess the efficiency and impacts of library activities
- Establishment of communication mechanism among libraries and their stakeholders, partners and communities
- Continual involvement into the process of preparation and improvement of national regulations and guidelines with reference to practices of European and international information policy
- Observation of trends in information processes, including IT issue, worldwide
- Application of consolidated solutions of information infrastructure into library activities

The inclusion of given aims into the library policy framework significantly shall increase visibility of libraries in information policy arena nationally and internationally. In digital 21 century where the flow of information is instantaneous and without boundaries, library vision shall be strengthened by leading debates and advocacy to national and international information community in strategy and policy and informational standards.