

IFLA Trend Report: English summary of the AIB meetings with Italian Librarians

Synthesis by Anna Maria Tammaro

The conversation on "IFLA Trend Report" has been started in Italy by the President-elect Donna Scheeder last AIB Conference (2013). Later, on 13 October 2014, the Tuscan Section of AIB held a first discussion event on IFLA Trends Report. The second and third events about the Trends Report were organized in Milan on October 27th, 2014 and on March 13th, 2015. The purpose of the meetings has been to analyze the 5 IFLA trends in Italy to predict the possible impact on the future of Italian libraries.

Participants were asked to read the report IFLA Trends in the Italian version translated from the group "Young and aspiring librarians": http://trends.ifla.org/files/trends/assets/trend_report_ita.pdf

The presentation of the 5 Trends of Anna Maria Tammaro are here:
<http://www.slideshare.net/tammaroster/tammaroppttrendreport-it>.

The events were organized using the style of World Cafe, with the discussion started by Italian experts who have described the trends in Italy and in Europe. The end result was a WIKI report, structured as synthesis of the discussion with the experts and the summary of single trends discussion done at the tables. The WIKI will be updated as a cooperative effort.

The results of the discussion have been translated into English and are following here:

1. Are the 5 trends affecting the role and services of the libraries in Italy?

The trends highlighted by IFLA Trends Report have a clear impact on the role of libraries itself, they are pushing for a thorough reflection on innovation (ie to do differently) and creativity (ie to do more). Of course there are also risks to the role of libraries, which have been well highlighted by the experts and librarians discussion around the tables.

2. What do the experts say?

Agnese Perrone (Swets Italy) affirmed that in Italy some obstacles to the spread of e-book persist and e-books represent 3% of total content production, corresponding to approximately 40 million euro. Some obstacles are related to national policies, such as VAT to 22% (compared to 4% of paper books), others are cultural, because the e-book is still considered in competition to the paper book. Digital publishing has stimulated the emergence of a number of projects carried out in collaboration with different stakeholders, with a strong impact on libraries. The projects have followed three lines of research: 1) collaborative platforms, 2) project development on common areas, 3) study of new business model. The new business models influence for example the access allowed by the licenses and now limit the use, push the purchase of entire packet subscriptions (big deal), embargo periods, etc.. The phenomenon of Open Access is another innovative trend that is growing and developing a new infrastructure.

Argyri Panezi (EUI) has focused on the legal aspects of digital publishing, which are threatening the traditional role of libraries for access to information. In her presentation she outlined three different types of work, corresponding to three applications of copyright: copyrighted material, orphan works, works in the public domain. Access to copyrighted work is divided into two phases: access

licenses (input) and the access mode (output). As a consequence, you cannot e-lending, while you can borrow books on paper. For orphan works there was the EU Directive 28/2012 and an interesting recent development relates to a case raised by the university libraries of Darmstadt, where the court ruled that a Member State may authorize the digitization for reading inside the library at an electronic workstation. The works in the public domain are the only ones that facilitate creativity and reuse. In conclusion, the role of libraries itself is at risk and librarians need to follow the trends of the EU and national laws.

Maurizio Lunghi (Digital Renaissance Foundation) has shown how technologies have an impact on various aspects of the production of information and of its distribution, creating opportunities and problems for users, such as the overload of information, the preservation of digital resources, the digital divide, the right to privacy, etc.. Starting from these problems, libraries may offer services that facilitate users and for example make them able to use at the best the information.

Maria Chiara Pettenati (INDIRE) illustrated the trends of e-learning in Italy through the experience of INDIRE which was born as a Pedagogical Documentation Library, from 2001 became an institution for innovation in teaching and research and for the provision of a platform for training for lifelong learning. In this second activity, INDIRE has trained about 1 million teachers and is currently engaged in the certification of skills. The e-learning is not just the application of technology to teaching but involves:

- Skills (literacy) that allow people to access critically and consciously the opportunities offered by the network
- Methods / modes / mechanisms in which training courses conducted online are recognized and certified
- The need to ensure sustainable access to resources of various provenance, size, nature, and combining units of training and the use of open resources
- The management of a portfolio that tracks, in respect of privacy, and with the necessary flexibility, lifelong learning activities
- Mediation of linguistic resources available
- Globalization / localization of new resources and learning opportunities

3. What has been said at the tables?

After discussion at the tables of the World Café, the following opportunities / challenges were highlighted:

3.1 Which trend is impacting more on the role of the libraries and why?

The trend that has impacted more and that libraries are already experiencing is the first one: new technologies will expand or limit access to information? Digital publishing does not fit into the traditional publishing industry, based on which libraries are organized. The new business model and legal constraints limit the traditional role of libraries for access to information.

3.2 What trends are in contrast with the experiences of the participants?

Between the different trends that have been discussed, what seemed most “foreign” to librarians participating to the event was the e-learning!

3.3 What are the questions that must be answered urgently? which

other conversations we need to continue?

WHY: one must start from “the role” of libraries in society and not by WHAT namely the functions of libraries. There is, however, the need of data and research to help to define the context of Italian society for the different trends and to evidence their real impact on libraries; especially there is the lack of research and analysis of the needs of the users. On these lines of research librarians will need to focus, in collaboration with the universities.

In the discussion it was asked: What is culture? What is knowledge? What is learning! This conversation is to be continued ...

3.4 What trends are in contrast with the expectations expressed by librarians?

The libraries have become marginal in the flow of information of the institutions and users, they are in competition with private services and social media. The role of libraries needs to be re-organized with new services innovating the mediator role between users and information resources, re-innovating the mediation of culture, addressing the social and “partecipative” value of libraries which crosses all services.

3.5 What trends may come as a surprise, that is unprepared, for libraries in the future?

The libraries must be able to run the risks of change. Highlighted as a priority is: to listen to the users and their needs. A widespread perception of librarians is the lack they have of computer skills.

3.6 What priorities libraries must choose for their own future?

Italian libraries must prepare strategies, starting from current user needs within the new context of society and not from the techniques and functions.

New partnerships with the users are necessary, as for example self-publishing, crowdsourcing and digital content creation.

Libraries must have a specific responsibility towards the citizens for the information literacy, starting from when they are children and then throughout the lifelong, culminating with the e-learning of the library and information services.

3.7 What needs to be changed?

Some activities and services can be abandoned or made differently. In libraries even the spaces are used differently. Traditional cataloging changes with RDA and the Open Data