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The Multimedia Library at Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Marwa EL SAHN

Head of Multimedia Library, Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Marwa.elsahn@bibalex.org

<http://www.bibalex.org>

Abstract

The Multimedia Library of Bibliotheca Alexandrina is considered one the major topics to be presented this year in IFLA conference 2003. The paper follows the structure of the "Guidelines for Audiovisual and Multimedia Materials in libraries". It includes an introduction about the Ancient Library of Alexandria, the Idea of the revival of the library, The New Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Organization and Functions, Mission Statement, Guidelines for Multimedia Library and finally new projects to be implemented by the Multimedia Library of Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

The Ancient Library of Alexandria

The Library of Alexandria was one of the leading intellectual centers of the world. Having assembled a unique collection of scientific, philosophical and literary works, it was also a haven over the centuries for numerable authors who found their source of inspiration there...The Library they built in the fourth century BC, became the world's first university with its college scholars including such famous names as Euclid, Erastosthenes, Heron and Archimedes, to name but a few.

The great library, which also served as a publishing house, was built at the side of the museum. Anticipating our modern libraries in the way it was run, it had a catalogue of all the works it possessed - 700,000 of listed and classified manuscripts already in the third century BC - and enjoyed "legal deposit rights", thereby, being entitled to make a copy of every book that entered the country. UNESCO

Idea of the revival of the library

Alexandria University was the first to call for the idea of reviving the Ancient Library of Alexandria. This Project aims at building a universal modern public and research library to be a center of culture, science and academic research.

The library is to provide both the national and international communities of scholars and researchers with unique collections and facilities focusing on Alexandrian, Egyptian, ancient and medieval civilizations as well as on contemporary disciplines. The Library will also have valuable collections of science and technology resource materials to help the socio-economic and cultural development studies on Egypt and the region. Bibliotheca Alexandrina will sponsor intensive studies on the historical, and contemporary cultural heritage of the region.

Aswan Declaration

After the memorable historical meeting in Aswan, on February 12,1990, members of the International Honorary Commission including Heads of State and world dignitaries signed the Aswan Declaration for the Revival of the Ancient Library of Alexandria.

Awards for Architecture

The winner of the first prize of the 1989 international architectural competition is the Norwegian architectural firm of Snohetta. The Consortium Consultant Snohetta/Hamza was contracted in October 1993 for the design, implementation and construction supervision of the Project. Foundation execution works began in January 1995.

The New Bibliotheca Alexandrina

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina neighbors the University of Alexandria Faculty of Arts campus, in Shatby, and overlooks the Mediterranean Sea to the north.

The US\$150 million project is designed to accommodate 4 to 8 million volumes.

The new library is designed as a modern state-of-art translation of the old, adequate for crossing the frontiers and meeting the challenges of the 21st. century.

The design concept of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a simple circle representing the Egyptian sun, to symbolically illuminate the world and human civilization. The inclined roof allows indirect daylight and a clear view of the sea.

The building is clad in Aswan granite engraved with calligraphic inscriptions representing the world civilizations. This wall symbolizes both the heritage of the region and a revival of cultural radiance to reach out to all corners of the universe.

The library is 525 feet (160 meters) in diameter and 750,000 square feet (70,000 square meters) in area. The main reading hall is located in half the building in a large open amphitheater, accessible through a central loaning station and smaller satellite information desks. The reading room seats 2000 persons and is flexible in its accommodation of current and future technologies.

Snohetta designed the furniture as a part of the overall design. Because the main reading room is terraced, the tops of the tables, shelves, and chairs are highly visible from many viewpoints.

The furniture is made of natural materials including woods, leather, and stainless steel.

Organization and Functions of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

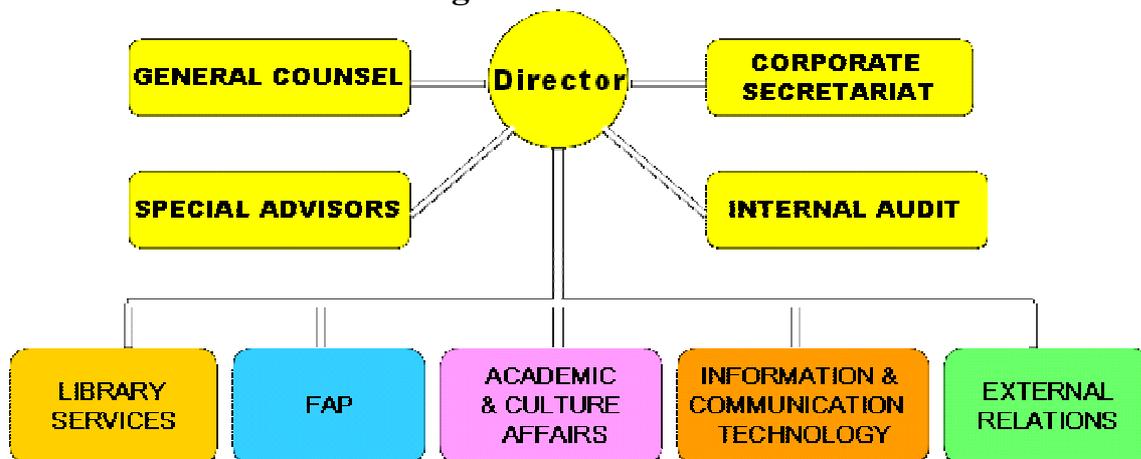
It will certainly contribute to excellence in research and advancement of human knowledge. The library will become a unique admired research institution, a haven for scholars worldwide to produce their quality work of excellence. It will also be an invaluable information resource to support decision-making and broaden future horizons for the cultural, social and economic development of Egypt and the region. Subsequently, the library will play a needed role to further cooperation between the north and south of the Mediterranean Basin as well as between the east and west.

It will have a four-pronged approach for its work program:

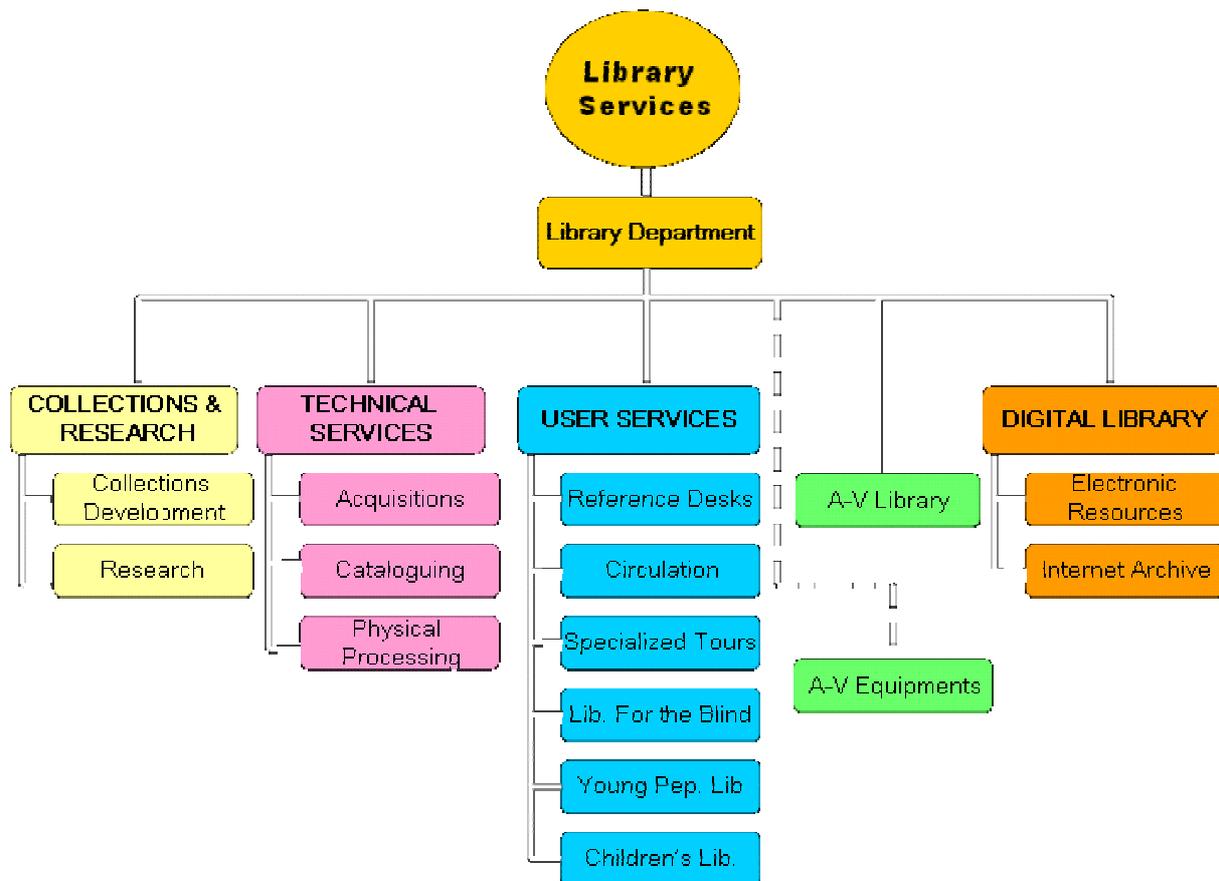
- Window of Egypt on the world
- Window of the world on Egypt
- A library for the digital age
- A center for dialogue and debate

This approach is directly related to the collection's strategy and how the library will define itself to be unique among the great international libraries of the world. The first priority will be broad and deep collections about Egypt, and especially Alexandria and the ancient library, and documenting the modern history of Egypt. Collections about the Mediterranean Region, Africa, since 70% of the Arab world is in Africa, the Arab World, without duplication of efforts, will be among those emphasized, in addition to the general coverage usually offered in a universal library.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Organization Chart



Library Department Organization Chart



The Multimedia Library at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

The Multimedia Library of Bibliotheca Alexandrina is considered one of the major topics to be presented this year in IFLA conference 2003.

The paper follows the structure of "Guidelines for Audiovisual and Multimedia Materials in libraries"

The Multimedia Library of Bibliotheca Alexandrina opened to the public almost 10 months ago to provide distinctive services consistent with the main library mission and recognized international standards. Development of the services at the Multimedia Library is a continuous process.

Guidelines of the Multimedia Library

1. Introduction:

Definition of the Multimedia Library:

The Multimedia Library is one of the major departments of Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

It is located on the third basement floor (B3) and holds a wide range of audiovisual materials such as videotapes, audiotapes, sound recordings, CDs, DVDs, photos, slides, transparencies, etc....

The audiovisual materials cover different disciplines and fields, as educational, cultural, religious, political, documentary, Musical programs and others.

One of the major roles of the Multimedia library is to document & preserve valuable material for heritage & new technology. The documentation is archived by recording and cataloguing not only the acquired collection but also all the events, conferences and other activities taking place at Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The Multimedia library accommodates researchers and the general public and make available for them study rooms and high-tech equipment.

The collection of the Multimedia Library consists of:

- Printed material: in Cinema, Music, and Theater.
- Analog material: on Video & Audio tape covering above topics, plus other documentary films in almost all subjects covered in the main library
- Digital resources: CD's & DVD's, and Electronic resources.
- Internet Archive: Movie Archive, 1000 digitized archival films from the Internet Archive, these 20th century films about everyday life, culture, industry, and institutions in the United States. Working in collaboration with the Internet Archive the Library is making these collections available to all users of the Internet.
- Internet Archive: 2000 hours of Egyptian and US television broadcast.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina policy for the Multimedia Library

The Multimedia Library policy is consistent with the Main library policy and priorities. The main priority is the allocation of resources to cover Alexandria, Egypt, Middle East, Arab World, Mediterranean region, Africa and finally the rest of the world in a non-print digital format rather than analogue format.

2. General statements

The priority is given to researchers, then general public and finally to students in Music, Cinema and Theater.

The Multimedia Library cover two different type of materials: Print & non print in Music, Cinema and Theater and non-print in all subjects covered in Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

3. Scope of the guidelines: Definitions/ Materials

Type of materials (content & format)

Bibliotheca Alexandrina is more oriented toward the digital and electronic formats even though Bibliotheca Alexandrina faces challenges in the areas of copyrights issues, and conservation of the materials in electronic format.

Type of equipment

Although Bibliotheca Alexandrina is more oriented toward the digital format, we also use different equipment for analogue format. Bibliotheca Alexandrina receives donation from individuals, institutions, organisations and countries in various languages and formats.

4. Organization and administration

The Multimedia Library is considered the Central unit for cataloguing and classification of all audiovisual materials for the main library, the Young People Library, the Children Library and Taha Hussein Library (Library for Blind and visual impaired).

Special equipment and competencies are needed to manage the audiovisual materials and multimedia resources.

Staff, education and training

Human resources development and special training are continuous process at Bibliotheca Alexandrina. It is essential to develop the technical and managerial skills of the staff to be able to acquire new technologies and equipment.

Special subject training for librarians are conducted to make staff aware about librarian's tools such as: DDC (Dewey Decimal Classification), LCSH (Library of Congress Subject Heading), Rameau (Répertoire d'Autorité-matière encyclopédique et alphabétique unifié), MARC21 (Machine-Readable Cataloging).

Language training is a must to develop language proficiency for staff to be able to understand different materials and communicate with users in different languages. Donated materials are received in English, German, French and others languages.

Lectures related to Music, Cinema & theatre are organized on regular basis; mainly for the library staff and occasionally open for the public.

5. Acquisition, legal deposit

Budget: A defined budget for collection development, equipment, regular maintenance, storage, repair and replacements of hardware is necessary. This should be a defined percentage of the collection and equipment budget of the library, according to the type and size of the collection. And it should be reviewed every year in regard of the rapid changes in new technologies (as the Internet Archive).

The Multimedia Library plans for the coming 5 years to covers all Egyptian, Arabic and than Mediterranean region non-print materials in Music, Cinema and Theatre.

Some points to take into consideration during acquisition procedures:

- Guidelines for Multimedia Library Policy.
- Number of copies bought for print & non-print materials.
- Priority for non-print materials in Music, Cinema & Theatre and than others subject.
- Priority for print documents in Music, Cinema & Theatre.
- Planning for being the main source for information services for multimedia

collection in Music, Cinema and Theatre for special Egyptian patrons such as the Egyptian TV, Cinema, Opera...

6. Copyright

- Bibliotheca Alexandrina Policy (Legal & Clearance) relying on national & international legislations and on organizations especially that our collection covers various titles from different countries with different laws.
- Number of licences (X number of users/ multi-users)
- Clearance letter from each producer to allow Bibliotheca Alexandrina the rights: Produce copies, Use in public for free, Use covers in poster, loan to the public (individual + institutions), take shots or part of the document and make copy for users, (concerts, movies..), convert from format to another...

7. Cataloguing and bibliographic access

All audiovisual materials are included in the general catalogue of the library to provide maximum information for usage. In addition all audiovisual materials bibliographic records in VIRTUA Database are mapped to Mmediaview Database.

- Audiovisual materials are a first priority for the cataloguing (Include Young People, Children & Taha Hussein libraries).
- Printed materials of Multimedia Library is 2nd priority
- Printed materials of the Main library is 3rd priority
- Preparing Staff Manual for Virtua & Mmediaview database including Cataloguing module, circulation module (check in & out of document). Then Acquisition module, booking system for Mmediaview.
- Rules & regulations (some problems, exceptions, Dewey policy for Bibliotheca Alexandrina).

Virtua from VTLS (Virginia Tech Library System)

The Virtua ILS is a comprehensive client-server software solution that allows you to offer your patrons the latest technology for accessing information around the globe. Offering numerous advanced features in an integrated solution, Virtua ILS helps you manage your library's collections.

Virtua ILS improves workflow management for your library staff and provides powerful, flexible and convenient access to distributed multimedia information. A graphical user interface (GUI) client also furnishes an intuitive, familiar work environment with the use of tabs and floating menus and many additional access points, allowing quick travel through the database.

Virtua's basic subsystems include Acquisitions, Cataloging, Chameleon iPortal, Circulation, OPAC, Reports, Serials, Reserves, InfoStation®, Systems Profiling, and Unicode Language Support.

MmediaView Database

MmediaView database is covering the technical part of the system. It is provided by EI Audiovisual (Entreprise Industriel) a French company.

The major role of this system is to follow the display of all digital audiovisual

materials (electronic files: CDs, DVDs, Electronic resources). The second role of this system is the seat booking inside the library. Also this system manages the print servers for the users.

8. Operation Routines & Procedures

The workflow from the selection for a title to the check out for the user:

- a. Selection for titles (by collection development group & approved by the head of the unit in order to review by priority & budget).
- b. Responsible units in the library department carry out procedures for authorization and purchase.
- c. Receiving materials and check them by the technical group.
- d. Check & evaluate the contents by librarians before data entry
- e. Cataloguing, classification and data entry are than performed by librarians.
- f. Audiovisual materials are organized with the serial number in the storage area according to the format (video, CD, CD-ROMs, kit, audiotapes) to facilitate their communication to the users.

9. Digitizing and preservation

The Multimedia Library has an important role in the digitizing of different document either from print format to electronic format or from analogue to digital format starting with Bibliotheca Alexandrina products.

The Multimedia Library is starting a new project for digitising photos, with slides collection, all BA products (photos, postcards, exhibitions...). This collection will be catalogued on both Virtua and Mmediaview database and will be accessible for the users from Bibliotheca Alexandrina OPAC.

Second project is converting the video collection to DVD in order to play via the server, in different location, taking in consideration all copyrights issues.

10. Internet

The Multimedia Library started to select web sites concerning Music, Cinema, Theatre, and Languages for the users. This list of web sites will be available on Bibliotheca Alexandrina web site.

The selection web sites is made in collaboration with Electronic Resources unit with a yearly plan by Multimedia Library priority example: (Egyptian music, Egyptian cinema & Egyptian theatre)...

11. User services

• Information desk services responsibilities:

- a. Guide users in searching for a document by title, subject or author on BA OPAC, Databases, and Electronic Resources
- b. Show users how to search for certain type of material: video, CD, DVD,

audiotape...

- c. Book a seat for users with different logical type of equipment.
- d. Book a seat for user in the group show room.
- e. Check out & check in items for the users.
- f. Provide users with Survey sheet, Acquisition request form, Search request form.
- g. Organize and shelf read the collection.

- ***Statistics related to Multimedia Library services:***

The Multimedia Library has opened its door to the public in October 2002.

More than 80% of the users are students, 15% are general public and 5% are one-day visitors. Although the Multimedia Library is open to the public all the week from 11:00-7:00 except Tuesday and Friday, Saturday from 3:00-7:00, we noticed that the number of users increases from 1:00-5:00 during the week and not during the weekend. 80% of the collection requested by users is Video, than, Kit (for languages), than audioCDs, and audiotapes. More than 80% of the titles requested are in History, Politics, TV program. And more than 90% of requested titles are in Arabic except for language learning materials.

Monthly Circulation Statistics by number of requested format

| Month | AudioCD | Kit | Video | Total |
|--------------|----------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| May | 73 | 133 | 193 | 399 |
| June | 75 | 120 | 394 | 589 |

12. Cooperation

The Multimedia Library works in collaboration not only with other departments related to our work inside the library but also with others libraries and institutions nationally and internationally: The National Library and Archive of Egypt, AUC American University in Cairo, Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport and many others in Egypt; Gothenburg university library, Institut du Monde Arabe, and many others libraries and institutions, abroad.

13. Future Services:

Heretofore new services that the Multimedia Library of Bibliotheca Alexandrina will start soon. These services are still under study and development; they will transform its role from a passive to an active role, by targeting new users and attracting new audience to the Multimedia Library.

- The first service will target users and researchers interested in performing arts, through the use of the collection of 1000 copyright cleared motion pictures of the Internet Archive. The Multimedia Library will provide its users with software permitting the editing of movies allowing them to clip these movies in order to reuse them in their presentations, their lessons, or any non-profit purpose.
- The second service will target the university and school students, through the coordination with professors and teachers who will identify in our collections, educational resources of interest to their respective subjects and educational levels that could be used as teaching aids in their classes, or help them to build their

lesson plans and curricula. The Multimedia Library can also organize and host collective sessions to view these materials and discuss them between students and their professors.

14. Conflicts & Problems:

IFLA Conference is a great opportunity to share experience with colleagues and benefit from others' knowledge, that why we are trying here to describe the major conflicts that we faced in the Multimedia Library in order to get support from participants.

Languages:

We face a cataloguing problem for audiovisual materials in languages other than Arabic, English, and French, especially that Bibliotheca Alexandrina is receiving donations in different languages. The original cataloguing of these materials is difficult. The copy cataloguing cannot be considered as a reliable solution because these materials are rarely available in union catalogues and utilities such as OCLC, beside the holding libraries of these titles, although have their catalogue automated, they rarely use MARC formats and sometimes don't offer downloading options for their records.

Technicalities:

The management of playing the digital collection in different location.
All websites in the Internet should be accessible for the libraries users without any restriction of any type?

Copyrights:

How we can easily identify distributors and vendors of audiovisual materials who will accept to negotiate the copyrights for non-profit organisations as libraries? What are the guidelines of such negotiations?

15. References:

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