

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS
UNIVERSAL DATAFLOW AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
CORE PROGRAMME

1996

ANNUAL REPORT

Leigh Swain
Programme Director

March 1997

THE UDT CORE PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT 1996

1. INTRODUCTION

The UDT Programme Plan for 1996 continued to follow the goals and objectives set out in the 1992-1997 Medium-Term Plan and IFLA's Long-Term Policy. The UDT Core Programme remains the focal point for the promotion of the international and national exchange of electronic data and works to provide the library community with pragmatic approaches to electronic communications and resource sharing. The 1996 Work Plan reflected a recognition of the potential impact of information technology and telecommunications on the nature and breadth of library services. This focus is in line with IFLA's Long-Term Policy to influence the development and application of information and telecommunications technologies in order to assist librarians in providing services responsive to the changing needs of library users.

This trend towards increased use of informatics technologies in libraries will continue in 1997. Dialogue and cooperation with the other IFLA sections, divisions, round tables and core programmes remains a priority.

2. IFLANET SERVICES SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Developing the electronic services of IFLANET remained a primary focus of the UDT Core Programme. The 1996 IFLANET Annual Report provides further information about these activities. Major work plan items pertaining to IFLANET include:

1. Planning and Development
2. Electronic Communications
3. IFLANET WWW Services
4. IFLANET Unplugged CD-ROM
5. IFLANET Mirror Site

2.1 Planning and Development

UDT continued to play an active role in planning for future IFLANET development. This planning is essential in order to extend the reach of IFLANET services into new areas and to accommodate the growth of the service. This planning and administrative operation has included:

- The preparation of guidelines and provision of training materials to IFLA members who wanted to provide content on IFLANET, at the annual conference, and through the IFLANET electronic services.

- A draft version of a policies and procedures document was prepared for approval by the IFLA Executive Board. This document sets forth various guidelines and policies pertaining to:
 - * Roles and Responsibilities
 - * Mirroring
 - * Centralized versus Decentralized Sites
 - * Mailing Lists
 - * Multilingual Publishing on IFLANET
 - * Publishing on the Site
 - * Contacts Information

- A document on possibilities for IFLANET revenue generation was prepared for discussion, and consulting to IFLA HQ was provided regarding this matter. An action plan for the development of fee-based IFLANET electronic exhibits for distribution on IFLANET Unplugged was created and IFLA HQ is currently marketing the idea to potential advertisers. UDT will be responsible for technical support and consulting for this activity, and other revenue generating possibilities derived from IFLANET services. This effort is expected to continue throughout 1997.

- An evaluation of various technologies for multilingual publishing on the WWW was conducted. Based on the strength and popularity of the technology, Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format will be used for future multilingual documents and retrospective publishing of selected documents.

- An experimental WWW-Fax service was tested in 1996 with Universal Access Inc. to evaluate the technology. As the service is presently fee-based, a limited period trial may be undertaken in 1997 to further evaluate pricing options, potential usage, and perceived utility of the service.

- A number of public WWW-to-email gateway services are being supported for this type of access. Consequently, the UDT Core Programme is no longer actively considering the development of this type of electronic access. Details for accessing WWW services through email are available upon request and regularly sent to IFLA members via email from IFLANET Administration.

2.2 Electronic Communications

In 1996, the UDT Core Programme continued to provide IFLA HQ with consultative support on the use of the services available over the Internet in order to improve personal and professional communications between IFLA HQ and its membership and among members of the international library community. This effort has met with considerable success.

A major component of IFLA's electronic services is based on electronic mail. IFLA's electronic profile is considerably enhanced through the ease of accessibility that electronic mail provides. Responding to the considerable requests for various kinds of information from users around the world has become a major task of the UDT Core Programme. Recent requests have included providing information about CD-ROM technologies, CDS/ISIS, database products, WWW-accessible libraries in Latin America, and using HTML.

Internet mailing lists continue to establish themselves as an important and popular means for individuals to communicate with others. Electronic mail access to IFLA personnel, services and information remains a cornerstone of IFLANET.

IFLA-L now has over 800 subscribers. IFLANET currently operates and moderates three very popular mailing lists that reach over 6,000 subscribers in over 60 countries. In 1996, over 5 million messages were sent world-wide through the IFLANET mailing lists. The amount of traffic resulting from IFLA email usage necessitated a processor upgrade to the National Library of Canada mail server to accommodate existing and projected traffic.

The DIGLIB and LIBJOBS lists are among the most heavily subscribed to lists on the Internet. Other IFLANET-supported mailing lists assist in facilitating communications between specialized groups within IFLA. IFLANET continues to utilize electronic mail communications to distribute organizational information and to facilitate resource-sharing.

The "care and feeding" of IFLA lists by the UDT moderators was important in the contributing to the success of these lists. Information from technology scans undertaken by UDT staff were regularly contributed to the DIGLIB and IFLA-L lists, while job postings culled from various sources were used to provide increased value to the LIBJOBS list. Responding to queries from list subscribers, IFLA members, and the general public represented a measureable contribution of UDT staff resources.

The UDT Core Programme continued its efforts to encourage sections and round-tables to use the IFLANET mailing facilities to better communicate with their constituents.

2.3 IFLANET WWW Services

UDT began the full operation of an IFLANET World Wide Web service in March 1995. Within a very short time, the IFLANET WWW service became a primary resource for library and information science on the Internet. Some recent IFLANET statistics are an indicator of the continuing popularity of the service:

Total successful requests:	691,408
Average successful requests per day:	1,889
Number of distinct hosts served:	140,389

Total data transferred:	13,366 Mbytes
Average data transferred per day:	37,397 kbytes

Further statistical details pertaining to IFLANET WWW services can be obtained from the IFLANET 1996 Annual Report.

The UDT Core Programme promoted the profile of the IFLANET WWW service through an active process of announcing IFLA publications on-line, through the development of paper-based promotional materials, and through the creation of electronic resources that have a high degree of interest to the library community-at-large.

Maintaining a high-quality electronic service is posing many challenges for the UDT Core Programme, in managing the diverse technical and human requirements, and in addressing the technical hurdles in developing and maintaining a large, dynamic and accessible document collection.

2.4 IFLANET Unplugged CD-ROM

The UDT Core Programme initiated and managed the development, in partnership with SilverPlatter Inc., the IFLANET Unplugged CD-ROM. The CD-ROM, which included all the documents available on the IFLANET WWW service, was made available freely to over 3000 conference participants.

This project involved considerable planning and truly global operations: the contents of the IFLANET WWW site were reconfigured for CD-ROM use in Ottawa, the print insert was created in Boston, the mastering of the disk was undertaken in London, the manufacturing and packaging in Ireland, and the entire shipment had to be transported to China. The entire management of the project took place through electronic mail and by courier of electronic disks and was completed in less than 4 months.

Planning for the 1997 edition is already underway.

2.5 IFLANET Mirror Site

IFLANET is a popular resource for librarians, and the WWW site is accessed from over 100 countries around the world. However, many international users face long download times because IFLANET currently resides at a single location in Canada and intercontinental links can be congested. To remedy this situation, UDT recommended that the central site be “mirrored” in the IFLA regions.

Mirroring consists of making an exact copy of an entire Web site at another location that: a) reduces the load at a primary site; and b) avoids the need to use slow intercontinental links when users reside on different continents. With the support of INIST (France) the first IFLANET mirror site was established in December 1996.

UDT provided assistance where appropriate and has developed guidelines for managing and developing mirror sites. UDT expects to continue its assistance in assisting in the development of other regional mirror sites.

3. PUBLICATIONS

3.1 UDT Series on Data Communication Technologies and Standards for Libraries.

Six reports in the *UDT Series on Data Communication Technologies and Standards for Libraries* were distributed by the International Office for UDT. Interest in these publications continued to be strong and we will continue to print additional copies of the reports and distribute them as required. Efforts to market the publications in library and information technology publications and at conferences will continue.

10 copies of *Electronic Document Delivery: Converging Standards and Technologies: 1991 (Report #2)*

8 copies of *OSI for Libraries: From Standards to Services: 1992 (Report #3)*

11 copies of *Electronic Data Interchange: An Overview of EDI Standards for Libraries: 1993 (Report #4)*

5 copies of *Packet Radio: Applications for Libraries in Developing Countries: 1993 (Report #5)*.

19 copies of *Models for Open System Protocol Development: A Technical Report: 1994 (Report #6)*.

42 copies of *Interlending in the Emerging Networked Environment: Implications for the ILL Protocol Standard: 1995 (Report #8)*.

Electronic versions of the UDT series are also now available on the WWW server and hundreds of copies have been distributed via this mechanism.

3.2 UDT Occasional Papers

In 1995, the UDT Core Programme initiated a very successful electronic series of occasional papers dealing with different aspects of information technology. The latest two occasional papers were:

4. Z39.50 and the World Wide Web.

Sebastian Hammer, Index Data and John Favaro, Intecs Sistemi.

5. The Seven Ages of Information Retrieval.

Michael Lesk, Bellcore.

Occasional Paper #3 was revised.

An Overview of the Z39.50 Information Retrieval Standard.

Fay Turner, National Library of Canada.

These Occasional Papers continue to be a popular series: over 10,000 copies of these papers were downloaded from the IFLANET WWW service. Adobe Acrobat format versions of these documents were also prepared.

3.3 Inventory of Full-Text Information Retrieval Software Vendors

In concert with the Section on Information Technology, the UDT programme oversaw the compilation by Malabika Das of an "Inventory of Full-Text Information Retrieval Software Vendors." This document will be updated on a regular basis.

4. WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES

4.1 CRIMEA 1996

The Crimea Conference, held annually in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, is the largest conference for librarians held in the former Soviet Union. UDT organized presentations and a half-day workshop on IFLANET and Internet-related topics at the Crimea 96 conference held June 3rd to June 7th, 1996, in Faro, Crimea. Gary Cleveland gave a presentation at the opening plenary session, attended by 600 delegates, about the Internet and IFLANET. He also gave a workshop where he spoke about the Web, its uses, and how to develop a Web site in a library. The workshop concluded with a demonstration of the IFLANET Web site. Approximately 60 delegates attended the workshop.

4.2 UDT Workshop: "Connection and Collaboration: Using the Internet in LIBRARIES."

A one-day workshop entitled "Connection and Collaboration: Using the Internet in Libraries" was held on August 29, 1996 at the 1996 IFLA Conference in Beijing. Focusing on Internet and Web applications for the international library community, the workshop provided approximately 50 participants with introductory information on the use of the Internet, WWW publishing, effective use of electronic mail, and how to provide information through IFLANET's electronic services. Gary Cleveland and Terry Kuny presided over the workshop. Handouts were distributed.

4.3 SIT/UDT Session: “Digital Libraries, Technologies and Organizational Impacts.”

Four speakers delivered papers to over 300 IFLA conference participants on this important topic. The speakers were:

- Mr. Terry Kuny (Global Village Research, Canada): “Digital Libraries: Myths and Challenges.”
- Mr. Kenjo Uetsuki (National Diet Library, Japan): “The Electronic Library Pilot Project.”
- Serge Salomon (Bibliothèque nationale de France, France): “La BNF, une nouvelle Bibliothèque, un nouveau Système d’Information.”
- Mr. Art Pasquinelli (Sun Microsystems, U.S.): “Introduction to JAVA and libraries.”

4.4 IFLA International Pre-Conference Seminar on Copyright.

The UDT Core Programme provided resources for Terry Kuny (Global Village Research, Ottawa) to attend the August 21-24 preconference in Tianjin, China. He delivered a paper, “Copyright in an Age of Electronic Reproduction: A Librarian’s Perspective.”

5. CONCLUSION

Developing and promoting IFLANET electronic services remained the focus of the UDT Core Programme in 1996. The services were enhanced, the electronic presence of IFLA continued to be established, and outreach to the international library community was conducted through the effective and regular use of electronic communications.

A continued commitment by the UDT Core Programme to the promotion and development of topical and timely electronic services, reaching a broad range of people through the delivery of services and information in a variety of forms, and a recognition of the need to continue to explore and develop alternative mechanisms for information delivery are expected to continue throughout the coming year.