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The library and the cultural political challenges in a digital age

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It is a great pleasure to be invited to the World Library Congress 2005, a magnificent gathering of library people from all over the world and a manifestation of the breadth and diversity and of the challenges facing libraries in 2005.

Most people whose daily work is in the area of art and culture are driven by a powerful motivation, a passion for the demanding field that one has chosen as one's livelihood. This applies not least to the many people throughout the world who work as librarians.

I will therefore begin my talk with a tribute to all librarians past, present and future in the form of an excerpt from an essay by the Norwegian author, philosopher and educationalist, Inge Eidsvåg.

"This was the year I visited a public library for the very first time – Trondheim Public Library. I still remember the strange atmosphere, the slowly dripping silence that dozed over the heavy oak tables in the reading room; the shelves upon shelves of books, the newspapers attached to rods, like dirty nappies hung out to dry; the old down-and-out in his shabby raincoat who alternately read and slept; the young girl with the heavy glasses and the great pile of books that she balanced just as alluringly each day.

Yes, I remember all of this. But, best of all, I remember the librarian, a woman of indeterminate sex and age with her hair tied up in a bun. She wore a blue overall and glided silently around the room. She had a whispering voice, and I am sure that no thoughtless scream ever escaped her lips (except perhaps the moment she was born).

But, best of all, I remember her smile. Not open and provocative. Not roguish or inviting, nor scornful, nor sarcastic. No, it was an introverted, knowing smile – as if she were concealing a great secret.

At first I thought that this librarian was out of the ordinary. However, I soon discovered that the other librarians at Trondheim Public Library smiled in a similar way. It was as if they had access to knowledge that was hidden to the rest of us. And when, later in life, I visited other libraries, I found the same smile there too. I became obsessed with the mystery of this unusual crack in the face.

Today, I think I know the answer. Every day of their lives, librarians witness marvels so great that all miracles pale by comparison. Out of the rows of black marks on the white pages rise up the people of the past. Confucius, Aristotle, Karl Marx, Sigrid Undset – they are there every single day, and they can be called forth at any time. The librarians know this – and they smile.

The art of printing changed the world. Five hundred years before Columbus, there was no way of telling the rest of Europe about the Vikings' discovery of America, since printing had not been invented. It is impossible to envisage the Renaissance without mass-produced books. In the same way, Luther's religious revolution rapidly broke the Church's monopoly on information. Luther was aware of this, and said that the art of printing was God's last and greatest gift to mankind. For the first time in history, the written word had made it possible for individuals to forget without this having disastrous consequences. Printing of books enabled a tremendous expansion of the collective memory of human society. This collective knowledge was stored in the libraries.

Books changed ways of thinking and of viewing life. The Bible, the Koran, Das Kapital and Mein Kampf affected the course of history. – – –"

And so he goes on, telling of books used as weapons, books with a hitherto unknown scope and force, books that were banned and burned, authors who suffered the grimmest of penalties. But also of the constructive power of literature.

Eidsvåg continues:

"The librarians also know something about the restorative power of language. They have watched us borrowers come, weighed down by grief and sorrow, dragging our feet along the shelves, grabbing a book, sitting down – and reading. For a long time. When we get up to leave, we have straightened our backs and concentrated our gaze on something in front of us. The librarians stand behind the counter, smile and understand. They smile because they carry within them an echo of the beauty of the language in the books they guard." (End of quote).

This very personal account elicits from us a smile of recognition- maybe recognition of a myth – but it also arouses a sense of nostalgia, harking back, as it does, to a time when the library was the only source of collective knowledge.

Historical background

This year, Norway is commemorating that it is one hundred years since the union with Sweden was dissolved and we gained complete independence as a nation. In the middle of the 19th century, Norway was one of Europe's poorest nations and was the country with the greatest pro capita emigration to the USA after Ireland. I mention this because language, art and culture played such an important role in the process leading up to independence.

At no time before or since has Norway had so many giants in artistic fields, artists whose work within drama, literature, music and painting holds a strong position as part of the world's cultural heritage. It is interesting that this took place at a time when we lacked almost all forms of cultural institutions and academies. These were all situated in Copenhagen. Artists therefore received their education in Paris, Dresden, Berlin and Rome. They created their works in the span between the great centres of civilization and the outermost periphery, between classical and traditional art. The struggle for independence infused the artists with creative energy, while their art gave the nation self-confidence.

The national culture-building in Norway coincided with the industrialization of book publishing and the democratization of the book; most probably it was no coincidence. This, in its turn, was a result of the replacement of rags by cellulose in the production of paper. The consequent explosion in the quantity of printed matter resulted in an increased need for registration, systematization and cataloguing.

In addition to these technological changes, the development of the school system and popular enlightenment contributed to a complete change in the role and responsibilities of the libraries. The start of the twentieth century saw an acceleration in the systematic development of libraries in Norway.

The struggle for independence had given rise to an increased awareness of the importance of the language for a nation as well as for individuals.

Identity requires expression. Expression requires language.

2005

Never before in history has human civilization experienced changes as great as those we experience today. Digital technology is the principal driving force behind the globalization process affecting people's lives all over the world, particularly as regards communications and dissemination of information and knowledge. It transcends the boundaries between different impressions and expressions, fact and fiction, information and art, literature, music, film and television.

It is the precondition for the technological convergence that we are currently witnessing between computer science, telecommunications and media. Not only does it enable us to carry out more rapidly and cheaply the things that we have done before; it also forms the basis for new formats and forms of expression. Influencing, as it does, basic social structures and relations between people, digital technology is the principal driving force of the globalization process affecting human lives all over the world. However, it also enables the creation of new monopolies, manipulation of facts and encroachment on privacy.

So what is digitization?

Ephemeral bytes on a computer screen instead of cellulose atoms with printer's ink. The traditional printed book has been condemned to death as many times as traditional cinema and cinematography during the so-called Digital Age, meaning the past two decades. *Film was*

declared “dead” already in the late 50s when television arrived, again in the beginning of the 80s when home-video (VHS) increased our film-consumption at home dramatically and was definitely and finally declared “dead” in the early 90s when HDTV (High Definition Television) was introduced.

We still have traditional cinemas and cinematography based on a one-hundred year old technology, silver halide crystals imbedded in a 35 mm wide strip of celluloid. Why? Because it can offer something very special. Powerful audio-visual experiences shared with other people in a darkened theatre in front of a Big Silver Screen. Now we are on the threshold of digitization of cinema and film distribution. As in all other areas, this will involve major changes in operation, programming and formats, and the concept of cinema will become far more differentiated.

In digital form, there is no difference between feature films, TV productions and transmissions from sporting events and concerts.

The breakthrough of the Internet and the World Wide Web has shaken the very foundations of the entire media industry, not least the TV and film industries.

In television, initiative and the power of choice have now been passed from the broadcaster to the viewer owing to the incredible expansion of content available at the push of a button and now also in an interactive mode. Traditional cinema and traditional publishing are still non-interactive, one-way communication procedures, for good and for worse. But things are a-changing...

Last year, 86 per cent of all written material published in the world was in digital form. And close to 80 per cent of the turnover of the average feature film was allocated outside the cinema theatre from DVD/video, TV and VOD.

The effect on the role of libraries

The responsibility of libraries has always been associated with printed matter in general and books in particular. The whole atmosphere, the very odour of a library, is infused with the smell of paper and printer’s ink. Its very image is the book.

The library today exists in a world where almost all messages are either created, shaped, managed, distributed or stored in digital form. Digital content is just a stream of bits and bytes, and networks and storage devices do not care whether the bits represent text, pictures, radio, TV or games. It can therefore easily be retrieved by users from many kinds of terminals, in the home, at work or while travelling.

Anybody who has worked on a PC knows of the incredible amount of material stored on the hard drive, and how difficult it is to find a given piece of information unless it has been properly indexed and you know how to use the available tools to search for it. Access to libraries, global archives, thousands of media channels – all digital – is a similar challenge, just immensely greater.

Search engines, electronic content guides and metadata are part of the solution but, for ordinary citizens to enjoy the new media situation, they will need guidance and recommendations from other human beings.

The future library may be the frame, and the friendly librarian may play many new roles in

facilitating learning, cultural experience, personal development and civil skills – regardless of the information provider.

However it gives food for thought that many libraries – the foremost providers of knowledge, culture and education in the local environment – have lived an insecure and somewhat frustrated existence in this glorious globalized information society.

Public Service dilemma

An important feature of the development undergone by large parts of the world is commercialization, whereby more and more areas of life are absorbed by the market. Almost everything is regarded as a product for sale or purchase, and the sale of information is a gigantic global industry.

Even within art and culture, we are witness to such an “objectification”, and this applies to most elements of what we call “the good life and society” – since economy is viewed as the end, not the means. Commerce is thus the locomotive of the digital revolution, whereas cultural policy is the last wagon attached to the train.

Established public service institutions, such as libraries, archives and public broadcasters, have all felt the effects of the new situation. It is precisely these institutions that are expected to bear in mind the good of individuals and the community as a whole without being concerned with short-term economic goals.

Just a few decades ago, these institutions reigned supreme in their fields, above the brutal mechanisms of the market. Suddenly, they find themselves in competition with a number of players in one and the same market. What, for many years, was reserved for public institutions is now viewed as extremely attractive by commercial players.

The role of the library in the digital age

Consequently the time is overripe for a fundamental discussion of the particular role to be played by libraries in the information and knowledge society. The Norwegian scholar Professor Ragnar Andreas Audunson has engaged himself deeply in this issue. I will therefore share with you some of his thoughts on this topic.

“Firstly, if we are to develop a library policy relevant to the challenges of the multicultural society, it is clearly important that we are undogmatic and that we free ourselves from a number of time-worn standpoints. However, while it is important to be undogmatic and open, it is of decisive importance that we hold on to the core principles of the library’s role and value platform. The value platform of the modern library service has come into being through a long historical process. A number of different ideologies have deposited their ideas and concepts, and have to some extent given rise to conflicts and to the development of different schools of thought.

However, through all of the ideological shifts and conflicts, the fundamental role of the library has remained that of making knowledge and culture generally accessible. The libraries are an instrument that can free knowledge from its ties to products that are sold in a market and owned privately, e.g. books, and from legislation that restricts the use and dissemination of such knowledge. In this way, the libraries help to realize the potential of knowledge as a public good.

This role is now being challenged by the spreading market ideology. This has also left its mark on the field of library and information science. Modern approaches, such as Information Management and Knowledge Management have, for the first time, provided approaches within the field that are not necessarily primarily characterized by what has always been the distinctive feature of the profession – that of making knowledge generally accessible.

However, the conflict between the potential of knowledge as a public good and the attempt of market economy to fence it in is, in our digital age, deeper and more fundamental than ever. An institution that can help to realize knowledge as a public good is not less, but more, necessary than it used to be. Developing a library policy that can ensure the preservation of this basic feature of the libraries' role and value platform must therefore be the main task of investigative studies.

A polarized debate

In recent years, the debate on library policy has been quite polarized. On the one side are the ideologically conservative, who tend to defend old positions. On the other side, are the proponents of modernization, advocating a culture of logistics and organization. While it is necessary to defend the fundamental values of the libraries, the libraries must take into consideration the real world that they serve. The central aims involve providing people with the potential for learning, for cultural experience and personal development, while developing the civil skills that will enable them to play an active part in the community.

If one thus takes as one's starting point what the values are intended to promote rather than the instruments, this will have consequences for library policy thinking and for the thinking associated with structure. The problems can no longer be reduced to logistics. What does this imply? In the long-term debate on the role of public libraries that is now needed, the fundamental value platform of the libraries – which is still necessary – can be best defended by freeing ourselves from the form of expression that was taken by these ideas 30–40 years ago.

Attractive arenas

In order to compete with other media and recreational provisions, the libraries must be attractive as physical arenas, have up-to-date technology and content and, not least, be visible in the community. As a consequence of this, we see that many small local libraries are being closed down in favour of larger central libraries. This trend is reinforced by the desire of many library employees to belong to a larger professional environment.

This is an understandable development, but it must be combated because the larger libraries will never be able to replace the function of the local libraries as local meeting places and arenas. In fact, the role of the library as a meeting place and arena is more important than ever in the digital, multicultural society.” (Audunson)

Communal culture, everything we enjoy doing in the company of others, is subjected to enormous competition nowadays. The greatest profits for the world's electronics producers are in home electronics. In a few decades, cinema attendance has fallen by 70–80 per cent.

“People still meet, to be sure, on the Internet, at work, at the café, at the football club, but the arenas for chance meetings, meetings with people who belong to another age-group or have a

different social background are less frequent. Populations more varied than ever are in many cases more segregated than ever. We can live our lives side by side, but in our own worlds.” Your privacy is my poverty. *“That is why the library as a public space is more important today than ever before.”*

The library has to compete with other leisure activities and meeting places, such as shopping centres and activity centres.

Localization of libraries is important and this too has its ancient traditions. Monumentalization and sacralization characterized the libraries of earlier times. At one time, library architecture often included elements from the temples of antiquity. To-day, libraries are no longer monuments creating a feeling of distance, they must be open and visible for the whole world to see.

Communication across social groups

“The libraries are used by all social groups, although people with immigrant backgrounds are overrepresented in the larger towns. There are few places in society where so many different groups are represented in the same location regardless of age, sex and social background. It is difficult to envisage any other institution with the potential to offer a corresponding arena for communication across social groups.” (Audunson)

Yesterday, Francis Sejersted told the story about the pensioners and the young people from the suburb who had made friends after meeting in the library’s computer room. For me, the library is a bridge connecting times and places, cultures and backgrounds. It is a bridge leading to awareness and to knowledge, and distributing life’s opportunities.

The role of the library in democracy

Democracy is the only form of government that requires enlightened citizens. This is a central ideological pillar of the Nordic social model, which requires broad popular participation in social developments and decision-making.

Among our cultural and social institutions, libraries play a central role in achieving just this. The salient feature of human beings is their lack of uniformity. Every single person has his or her own life and way of being – way of being human. It is variety and diversity that is the hallmark of human beings. But every single one of us is entitled to the same rights and potential for developing and expressing his or her view of the world, for expressing him or herself.

And we become ourselves in our meeting with other people, by being confronted with other views than our own. This does not only occur in the hope of being persuaded, but because arguments against our own view of the world or our own opinions can help to clarify shades of meaning in our own point of view. To the extent that this occurs, we master a little more of ourselves. Then we become a little more human.

Human and cultural diversity

The library shall therefore reflect this human diversity. Create a basis for deeper understanding, critical examination and awareness of context; provide access to the unpopular and uncomfortable thoughts as well. Above all, help to provide qualified quality assurance in

an overwhelming universe of information AND encourage a love of reading and the acquisition of reading skills.

For it was words that made us human. Without them, we would not know the world around us and we would not know ourselves. There would be no houses, mountains, trees, roads, rivers, animals or human beings. Without words, no world. We would not be able to distinguish light from darkness, true from false, right from wrong – and we would have no history. Since memory is created and maintained by means of words. We would be vegetative creatures, but not human beings”, as Inge Eidsvåg has written. And language consists not only of words, but also of images and of music, described and interpreted by means of an artistic temperament.

Language policy challenges in a digital age

Throughout the ages, there has been a dream that people all over the world should one day be able to speak to each other using the same language. Today more and more people communicate across continents and national borders by means of the same language. However, that language is not Esperanto, but English.

An example from Norway: In a short time, the last Harry Potter book sold 100 000 copies in English. For most young people in this country, language is no obstacle when one is too impatient to wait half a year until the latest book about Harry’s adventures is published in Norwegian.

Knowledge of several languages is of tremendous benefit, but must not result in a weakening of the mother tongue. This is far too high a price to pay. This situation gives rise to considerable challenges for language policy, particularly for small language areas. If we fail to meet this challenge proactively on a wide front, we risk an impoverishment of the world’s cultural and linguistic diversity.

Earlier this year, the net search company Google Inc. announced plans to use 1 billion US dollars over 10 years in digitizing and making publicly available the library collections of the USA. On the initiative of the President of France, the EU is now considering doing the same. It is of major importance that the cultural heritage of small countries too is made available in digital form, and there is no doubt that this will require the individual nations to invest considerable resources in cultural policy initiatives.

Cultural policy challenges

Cultural policy must be carried out on several levels. On the one hand, culture is an important dimension of all aspects of social development. All policy, regardless of which area of society is affected, influences our culture in the broadest sense. Whether it concerns education, city planning, development aid or the environment – or the lack of such things, it expresses values, ambitions and traditions.

It is a fact that this overarching form of cultural policy is often conspicuous by its absence. As a result of this, considerations of technology, industrial policy and economy often dominate. This also applies to “digital policy”, which is pursued in most industrialized countries. This is most prominently expressed through the imbalance between the gigantic investments within technology, on the one hand, and investments in harnessing the enormous cultural and social potential of digitization on the other.

The challenges of the digital age apply not least within traditional cultural policy – art, literature and cultural heritage. This field is organized in different ways in different countries. I believe it to be more important than ever that media policy is regarded as an integral part of the cultural area so that technology, administration and content can be viewed in a single overall context.

The same applies to intellectual property rights, the formulation of which is of decisive importance for the exploitation of digital tools and for the future of the creative community.

In short:

As I see it, the challenge of cultural policy in a digital age must be to ensure that the most advanced digital technology is implemented in such a way as to stimulate and enhance the public's general education, creativity, communicative ability, freedom of expression and access to cultural experience.

Organization

It is exciting to note what the basic features of old and new technology have to teach us about past and future organizational models. Mechanical technology laid the basis for top-down hierarchies. Digital technology creates dynamic interactive networks that open up new possibilities.

In order to harness the enormous potential of digital technology, we must break down old ideas as well as physical, organizational and institutional boundaries. This is our greatest cultural policy challenge. The digital age has recently given new life to a saying by Charles Darwin: *“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change”*.

How do we go about this?

- The various types of library must be given a visible place and role in our description of the knowledge society.
- This requires that the libraries become more outspoken and more visible. In the constellations that currently form the future landscape of information and knowledge flow, they are not easily discerned. This is politically problematical. Dependent on the political winds that blow in the different countries, there will, generally speaking, be varying interest for public involvement. The public economy is pressed, and there is keen competition for resources. There is also a struggle for political attention, where culture often draws the shortest straw.
- The entire map of culture policy must be redrawn. This must include a definition of the various libraries' roles in relation to each other and in relation to other cultural and social institutions.
- Many countries have “culture nets”, websites that connect cultural institutions. Such networks must also involve various forms of practical cooperation. The map of the internal and external markets of the cultural institutions must be redrawn so as to show relations, interactions and networks between libraries and other cultural institutions. In a moment, I will show you a practical example of such cooperation.
- The libraries' resources must be better utilized through cooperation and specialization.
- The library must be more visible as a centre for information and culture.

Digital movies and e-Cinemas.

The movie industry will be facing a rather dramatic transition from analogue to digital distribution and presentation in the coming years. Most of the production has already changed to digital, and the major studios in the USA have agreed on a common standard for distributing and presenting feature movies.

Europe is likely to follow these recommendations for what has been termed d-Cinema, a format that is likely to replace analogue 35mm feature movies. Europe has however indicated a need for smaller venues in rural areas and arenas for presenting alternative digital media content – so-called e-Cinemas.

The library has an important role as a physical meeting place, and e-Cinemas might become an important part of a library. At present there is no “natural” venue where a group of people can gather to watch digital media presentations, and e-Cinemas might fit very well into the blend of future library services. These may show films from the national film heritage, documentaries, locally produced programmes and many still-to-be-developed digital expressions.

The Deichman public library in Oslo has been planning a new main library to be built around 2008–2010. Several pilot projects have been conducted in order to determine what kind of services the public would appreciate. The library has already several operational Internet services, a well-established wireless network at the main library and several well-equipped multimedia workshops.

Since December 2004, three libraries in the Oslo area have operated such digital mini-theatres – seating between 25 and 50 users, who free of charge can watch movies available via broadband from the archives of the Norwegian Film Institute.

(PP-presentation www.filmarkivet.no enclosed)

The venues can also be used to link small audiences in different locations together for live cultural events, and act as digital storytelling arenas, where professional entertainers or amateur storytellers may perform live, using stored digital media projections in their performances.

e-Cinemas might use broadband connections to extend the meeting place to similar arenas anywhere in the world.

The Deichman Library has also established digital workshops, where people can get a basic introduction to using digital storytelling tools for creating their own audio-visual stories. Digital archives at libraries and elsewhere may provide material for part of such stories when rights issues have been clarified.

We may foresee a situation where user communities, with the help of “Wiki-like” software, can create audio-visual programmes in an interactive process.

A shrinking world.

Last year, a student from the University of Tokyo conducted a first rather primitive experiment, where a group of active seniors at a branch of the Deichman public library here in Oslo met with a similar group of seniors at a culture centre in Akabane in Japan.

Over a period of two months they exchanged physical picture books, communicated via the Internet and “met” in a virtual meeting room on the net, where they exchanged experiences and talked about their lives as seniors in two so different cultures.

This was an experiment, and there are many challenges before such communication can become part of daily life, but everybody who has had the experience of “Skyping” with far-

away friends and participated in net meetings knows that it is just a question of time before it may become a reality. Advanced camera phones – there are more than 30 million of them in Japan alone – may provide the platform. There is still a need for standardization and implementation, but very soon it may become a part of people's lives.

Get ready for a situation where citizens will have personal mobile terminals much more powerful than today's desktop computers, linked at speeds higher than today's broadband networks and with vast personal storage capacity – local or elsewhere. They can receive almost unlimited channels of information, education and entertainment.

The same terminals can record, edit and pass on what the user experiences in his or her daily life, and can present all kinds of digital content on local displays ranging from mobile screens to theatre displays. They will be inexpensive, and virtually everybody will have them. They will communicate with the user's home network and a number of public networks, including that of the library.

What kind of services and functions will the owners of such terminals wish the libraries to provide?

They may, first of all, want the libraries to act as public service centres where they can meet real people who may help them bring order to the digital chaos, and be active participants in local development, providing relevant information to cater for personal and local needs.

They may want a local meeting place, both physical and online, for citizens seeking information and cultural stimuli – a creative workshop for two-way knowledge exchange.

They may want the library to filter fragmented global information and information needed for daily local life – like a local window to the digital world with a human guide.

They will want constant information about local events and may want the library to organize blogs and other digital communication tools, where, together with other citizens, they can keep themselves informed and discuss local issues.

Interestingly, technology developed for entertainment in the rich world, may become tools for development and education in other parts of the world if it is introduced and managed in a sensible way. Developing nations may use the newest technology to leapfrog into a digital future, without having to struggle with antiquated infrastructures.

Eliminating the digital divide may be more a question of applying the right policies and education, and have much less to do with hardware.

Ways of using emerging tools to create new cultural assets should have the highest priority.

Sweet dreams?

Nothing is easier than heaping up good wishes. Flowery political speeches often fail to take issue with the realities that, for many libraries, can be quite grim. Realities not necessarily characterized by expansive visions for the future, but more of being caught between the increasing demands for new services while budgets do not even pay for the books that are needed, let alone pay for much-needed staff with new competence.

But, today, people are used to paying for media provisions and information. Has the “gratis” principle outlived itself? Would it be better to introduce payment for library services if this meant one could expand the library instead of starving to death?

In the great variety of libraries that exists today, there is in my view no absolute answer to this. The modern library, like other public service institutions, competes partly with the commercial information market, which offers tailor-made provisions. The main rule should be clear. The library is a social institution, and should therefore be a public responsibility.

“Society”, said PM Thatcher in the late eighties, “society does not exist”. She wanted, of course, to emphasize individuals and individualism, and freedom as she saw it. But the existence of society is a precondition for the development of individuals and their human rights and obligations. Society is a necessary condition for security and, in the words of the Charter of the United Nations, “social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

Social institutions represent continuity as well as change in our various societies. My own metaphor for society is a well woven, never ending tapestry. Institutions are the long warp, and the weft represents our changing inputs over time. Libraries are a case in point. Their roots are in antiquity, in countries where great civilizations were born. Throughout the centuries and all over the world, libraries have provided the knowledge base for what has happened, and what is possible in life, in the world, here and elsewhere.

Libraries are continuing institutions, still adapting and increasingly adopting the new media and means of communication but, notably, without discarding their existing collections. Collections are growing in old and new formats. Libraries are both warp and weft in my metaphor. They strengthen societies as well as individual freedom by being open to all. This access, in the words of the IFLA/UNESCO public library manifesto, “*should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship or to commercial pressures*”. Whoever enters a library is a user, not a customer, client or consumer. This individual can be a user because society exists and provides its citizens of all ages, categories and classes with public libraries as well as other institutions.

Diversity and pluralism are manifest on our doorsteps. We will need tolerance and solidarity, wisdom and knowledge to cope and to be creative together. Libraries have played and will continue to play a crucial role in succeeding in that respect. After all, culture is inconceivable without creativity.