



IFLA Section Government Information and Official Publications

IFLA GIOPS Newsletter Volume 2, Edition 2

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I. Officers' Corner

Introduction from the Chair

Hello everybody, the GIOPS Standing Committee welcomes you to the second edition of the GIOPS newsletter. We are still in the process of establishing our newsletter and want to address the government librarian community, but also other interested librarians and readers.

As we endure another cold winter in Europe, librarians will not be bothered so much about the effects of COVID 19 on their libraries, but about room temperature in reading rooms and offices. Who would have thought a year ago that the health crisis would be followed by an energy crisis? Some libraries might reduce opening hours, others might stay open to provide heated rooms for patrons who cannot afford to properly heat their homes. Whilst hoping for a mild winter, we can already dream about next summer. Hopefully, many of you will attend IFLA's WLIC in Rotterdam in August next year.

As for now, we hope this newsletter will have some interesting library news for all of you.

Read about a University Librarian in Macau, a place casinos and shopping malls are often associated with. Find out what Italian government librarians do to help the interested citizen cope with the large amount of documents published by public institutions and available for free on the internet. Get updated on news from Intergovernmental Organizations.

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will finish their 8-year-term with GIOPS next summer, so we will have quite a few openings for the Standing Committee. This is your chance, do not hesitate and check the IFLA Election Calendar. We will provide more information on our website and in our blog early next year.

Once more, we encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and please tell them to subscribe. We very much welcome your feedback and would like you to share comments, ideas, events and photos from your professional life wherever you are.

Best wishes,

Cornelie Butz (IFLA-GIOPS, Chair)

II. Interview with Billy Leung, Assistant University Librarian at the University of Macau Library

By Kay Ann Cassell



I recently interviewed Billy Leung who is the Assistant University Librarian at the University of Macau Library. His job responsibilities include both reader services and research support services. Included in reader services are the traditional business of the library which includes circulation service, interlibrary loan service, reference service and promotion activities. Research support services includes information literacy, research data analysis, and patent services.

Billy has worked at the University of Macau Library which is called the Wu Yee Sun Library for 38 years. Macau was originally a Portuguese colony, but in 1999 it was returned to China. The official languages of Macau continue to be Chinese and Portuguese, but English is used in business and at the University.

Billy told me that when he began at the Library there were no computers. There was

During a typical day Billy spends a great deal of time responding to emails from Macau and from the Mainland of China as well as from users in countries around the world. This requires a great deal of knowledge on his part to respond and to solve the variety of problems and issues that arise from the many questions since many users even those who live in Macau do not always come to the Library and need assistance with using library resources.. Billy also teaches an Information Literacy course for university students. This is a library course which can be customized for the students or class. Billy says that reader services is his favorite part of his job.

COVID-19

COVID-19 came to Macau early in 2020. But to date there have been fewer than 100 cases and no deaths.

The library closed on January 24, 2020 and partially reopened in March of 2020. The number of users that could use the library at one time was limited after it reopened and the user space was reorganized. Some services continued during the time the Library was closed such as online reference services and the use of online databases. The return date of books was extended and when they were returned, they were disinfected. Transparent partitions were put up when the library reopened to protect the staff.

An alliance of the ten university libraries in Macau was formed during COVID-19 to provide additional training for library staff such as how to use online resources. Some of the training came from database vendors.

Staff

The Library has 30 librarians and a total of 50 staff. Librarians must know two languages and have higher requirements since they must assist users with research projects.

Resources and Services

Reference service continues to be an important part of the Library's services. Reference is conducted by email, text, telephone and face-to-face.

There is a multi-cultural work group which deals with materials in Chinese, Portuguese and English and the resulting cultural issues. Another alliance has been established for Portuguese speaking countries including Angola, Mozambique and Brazil. A union catalogue for these countries is under development.

Macau has an over 400 year history. The Rare Book Collection continues to collect materials which document the history of Macau. These materials are available to users. Some have been digitized for easier access.

The University of Macau

The University of Macau was founded in 1981 and it is celebrating its 41st anniversary this year. There are many courses of study including the humanities, the social sciences, science and technology, engineering, computer science and Chinese medicine. Most courses are in English. But the law studied is Portuguese law.

There is also a Department of Portuguese. The University of Macau originally followed the British higher education model but now follows the American higher education model. It offers bachelor degrees as well as masters and PhDs. The university has over 10,000 students mostly from Macau, the Mainland of China, but there are students from many other countries as well.

I was impressed with University and the University library that offers good quality education and resources to its students.



III. GIOPS @ WLIC 2023 and IFLA Elections

IFLA WLIC IN ROTTERDAM 2023

The next WLIC will take place in **Rotterdam, Netherlands** from **August 21 – 25, 2023**.

Registration is already open. The Early Bird Rate is 580 EUR for IFLA Members and 800 EUR for Non-Members. For the Early Bird Tarif you must register until May 16, 2023.

The WLIC 2023 will be a hybrid event, making it easier to follow events for those of you cannot attend in person.

In our Spring Newsletter 2023, you will find information on what GIOPS is planning for its Public Session in Rotterdam.

IFLA ELECTIONS

Here is the general timeline for IFLA Elections 2023:

Announcements: May 2023

Unit Officer elections: May & June 2023

IV. Italian Government Information: What's the Challenge?

By *Stefania Tesser*



Overview of government information in Italy

Italian institutions are currently producing a large variety of documents that are freely available on the Internet. Their number has significantly increased compared to the situation in 1995, when the Official Publications Working Group of the Italian Library Association was established. However, it is becoming increasingly complicated for citizens to access them in an easy and efficient way. As stated by Laura Ballestra, the current coordinator of the study group on government information, the right to be informed about public bodies' activities must face the fragmentation of information sources, the little attention paid by institutions to long-term preservation, and the lack of structured directories and metadata sets, which enables people to identify and retrieve the relevant information for their needs. Moreover, in the last few years, the communication policy of the public sector has promoted the use of social media and news. Therefore, documents that were usually published on the home page are no longer published, or they are only available in specific sections devoted to professionals, such as journalists and citizens cannot find them easily. Finally, the raising of public open data cannot be seen as an effective way for citizens to access authoritative information because they are often exploited only by specialists.

With a similar complex landscape, the role of librarians as information facilitators has become more crucial than ever. The study group on government information therefore operates in two ways:

- encouraging public institutions to ensure the dissemination of all their documents by making them easily, freely, and permanently accessible; the production of guides and summary reports is also encouraged to help citizens understand official documents
- promoting civic information literacy and instruments of government information retrieval

The first objective is summarized in some recommendations of a manifesto. The second one is realized in a series of initiatives, among which the information literacy activities and the database DFP – *Documentazione di fonte pubblica in rete* are the most relevant.

The database DFP - *Documentazione di fonte pubblica in rete* (Italian government information on the net)

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Italian Library Association's website since 1997. It was transformed into a database addressing reference librarians and citizens in 2004.

Different types of resources (e.g., legal documents, statistical data, reports, databases and glossaries) related to central, regional and local administrations are organized according to a classification system that includes 17 activity sectors (e.g., environment, health and energy). More than 1,700 documents are currently searchable, thanks to a simple or advanced search. A synopsis of Italian legal, regional and parliamentary information helps users have an overview of the available documentation.

DFP plays an important role in collecting and organising different government resources in a unique portal, but its function is not limited to information retrieval. Bibliographic records and links are updated on a regular basis, which allows the editorial board to detect any change in access to documents (e.g., broken links have shown that some documents have been removed from websites or placed into parts that are more hidden). Thus, DFP helps monitor trends in the information and communication policies of public institutions.

Information literacy initiatives

There is a strong relationship between DFP and the outreach activities that the study group has been undertaking for nearly 25 years. Many librarians working in universities, documentation centers, and public libraries have been involved in training courses to help citizens evaluate quality issues and become information literate by developing a critical approach to official documents. This provides librarians with the opportunity to analyze the resources indexed in the DFP.

Dissemination activities are also focused on DFP resources, which are described in *Biblioteche Oggi*, an Italian journal of library science. DFP updates are spread by the discussion list of the Italian Library Association. Best practices are discussed in the workshops.

The Italian Study Group on Government Information

The Italian Study Group on Government Information was established in 2021 and is carrying on the activities of the previous working group of the Italian Library Association, particularly in the field of information literacy. Its work continues to pursue its aim of minimizing the lack of transparency of public institutions and helping citizens improve their knowledge and understanding of Italian government information.

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