



**C-YBERSPACE, D-WORLD, E- LEARNING:
Giving Libraries and Schools the Cutting Edge
IASL CONFERENCE 2007 – TAIPEI, TAIWAN 16-20 July 2007**

The 36 th annual conference of the International Association of School Librarianship drew 500 delegates from 31 countries to participate in 86 sessions, meetings, tours, exhibits and social events. The conference was hosted by the Library Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Graduate Institute of Library and Information Studies, National Taiwan Normal University. All sessions were held on the NTNU campus, while the gala ball was held in the magnificent Taipei Grand Hotel. The Taiwanese people did an exceptionally fine organizational job. This was one of the best run conferences we have ever had. On top of that they were the most friendly and helpful people to meet. They truly wanted to make one feel at home in Taiwan.

Heartiest congratulations to the **Toronto District School Board** which received the **IASL - LinksPlus Library Commendation Award 2007**, for its publication "Imagine the Learning! A Guide for Elementary Teacher-Librarians and Teachers to Use with Students" along with a cheque of \$ US 1,000. The publication was on display at the conference. It was applauded by many viewers, and will be used as a model for other districts to promote information literacy development in their schools. Congratulations to TDSB and the team that produced this fine document.

Keynote addresses for the conference were given by **Jay Jordan**, CEO for OCLC, whose topic was *'Digital Libraries and e-learning'*. His perspective was based on the way OCLC can bring global digitized information to its members. It works on the premise that every library should have access to the resources, whether or not it can afford the item itself.

The electronic divide between have and have-not communities is becoming a major concern.

Dr. Ken Haycock appeared before the conference electronically from his office at San Jose State University School of Library & Information Studies. He invited the participants to 'connect their agendas' to those of their stakeholders using: **V**ision, **V**oice, and **V**isibility. He reminded us that **C**ollaboration is a much higher priority than either the **C**ontent or the **C**ontainer. Access is important; tools are vital; and how to share the information about applying the tools effectively in the thinking-learning process is the highest priority. Advocacy and evidence-based practice are not the same thing. One depends upon the other to inform the decision-makers of the proper role of the school library in changing educational environments.

Dr. Mei-Mei Wu, from the Graduate School of Library & Information Studies, NTNU, spoke about *"Teachers Personal Knowledge Management and the Use of Global Digital Learning Objects Repositories"*. She challenged school librarians to sharper one's basic and advanced skills with current technology tools. We are obliged to help teachers learn





to us IT efficiently to create effective learning situations in their content areas. Helping individuals discover how to choose the most appropriate resources or tools is critical. Guiding beginning teachers to use the technology provides an avenue to promote collaboration and to establish teacher-librarian's credibility.

Presentation sessions were held every day, with many options. Some of the ones that we found most interesting were

1. Barbara Coombs (Australia) reported on an on-going research study into the habits and behaviours of the 'net generation' university students, and how able they are to access and synthesize information. Preliminary analysis shows that the students are technologically alert, often users of more than two or three types of access, and able to find a wealth of information. However, it is becoming evident that they do not have the necessary skills to do the analysis and synthesis of the information found, or to be able to create a product reflective of critical and rigorous thinking. The study is on-going.
2. Arthur Dagge (Portugal) reported on the lack of collaborative planning to develop reading strategies and information literacy generally across his country. He appealed for leadership from the school library community to use IT to integrate reading more effectively in lesson planning, home and school interactions, and creative student response to literature.
3. Angel Leung (Hong Kong) reported on successful strategies to integrate cooperative planning and teaching into the primary school programs in Hong Kong. She gave several concrete examples of the integration of the information literacy skills into curriculum content, through the use of more flexible scheduling and teacher-librarian initiation.
4. Suzette Boyd (Australia) reported on the application of an Australian Research Council grant to see how to 'generate information and avoid plagiarism" using collaborative models with classroom teachers. She outlined the steps taken to develop the culture of teamwork in the school.
5. Abrizah Abdullah and A.N. Zainab (Malaysia) reported on student's ICT readiness, usage of online resources and information seeking behaviour in secondary schools. The goal was to evaluate the ability of students to develop collaborative digital school projects which can be posted to electronic sites both in their schools, regionally and nationally.
6. Ross Todd (USA) emphasized the need to develop models of collaboration regardless of the format of the resources or the size of the school. He related information from several studies currently showing students' comments on their need for mentoring in the management of information and the construction of their





own understanding of knowledge. Teachers need scaffolding support in these new progressions in pedagogical methods.

7. Elizabeth Greef (Australia) looked at definitions of collaborative practice, relevant research, the critical role of the teacher-librarian, and information processing models. Then she presented practical unit/project/activity based models that were working in her school. A fine example of the theory applied in practice.
8. Naaz Kirmani (India) reported developments in the application of e-learning at the primary level. She dealt with methods of assessment of student's needs, the understanding of global benchmarks and other models. The role of the librarian as a leader in this area was discussed in detail.
9. Chang /Liu / Tsai / Fan (Undergraduates from NTU) reported on investigation of information needs and information seeking behaviours of elementary school students in Taiwan-interviewed with Xin Sheng and Wan Fang Elementary Schools. Their findings reported on the stimulus, source, channels, ways and the results for information literacy in elementary school children in Taiwan.
10. Peter Warning and Caroline Sinclair (Hong Kong) reported on a research study conducted at the Canadian International School, with senior student, to find their capacity to locate information (print and electronic), and then to analyze the material to create their own responses to the questions. It was discovered that location of resources was the easy part. Students had considerable difficulty creating their own responses without cut and paste endeavours. Obviously there is need for scaffolding these students to develop the analysis and synthesis skills necessary for them to be successful independent learners. This material corroborates the findings of Coombs reported earlier. Obviously an issue that needs to be addressed constructively around the world by teacher-librarians.

The exhibits, including one from the **Canadian Children's Book Centre**, drew considerable attention. Participants were very interested in the organization for author tours across Canada, as well as other publications including "Our Choice" which received rave reviews.

The **regular annual business sessions** were an important part of the conference.



James Henri, Professor, University of Hong Kong Centre for Information Technology in School and Teacher Education was elected president for the next three year term.

For other officers, please check out the website at www.iasl-online.org





The formal **Proceedings** were distributed, with registration material, in CD format. A copy of the CD is available if you would like to check out the presentations. The index to presentations is also on the IASL website. A printed book of presentation abstracts was distributed, along with a CD of the 19 **poster exhibit presentations** that had been selected from over 120 entries from the High School Library Clubs. These were very impressive exhibits, about 4' x 6' in colour. They reflected the students' perceptions of the strengths of their school library programs. Also provided was a History of Libraries in Taiwan, along with CDs from the tourist bureau, and from some school programs.

This year's **Auction** raised \$NT 70,000 (about \$US 2,300) which goes to the leadership development fund, and the support a member activities. This year the President challenged each member, and through them to their Associations, to come up with enough money to **Support a member/Association** in a developing country for three years. For a contribution of \$US 1000, it would be possible to sponsor 50 members in various developing countries. I would urge **ALL School Library Associations** to bring this matter forward for serious consideration. It is a practical and tangible way we can move to develop school libraries globally. The Executive Secretary, Karen Bonanno kbonanno@bigpond.net.au and a committee, will identify the individual to be sponsored, your association will be notified of the contact information, and you will be invited to mentor them with subscriptions to your journal, sharing professional publications, and giving support and encouragement on a continuing basis. Feel free to contact Gerald Brown, or the Secretariat directly on the steps to follow in this proposal.

Pre- and Post conference **tours** were superbly organized, comfortably arranged, and provided stunning views of the countryside, geological wonders, religious sites, and historic monuments. While the tours only covered a small part of the island (which is 1/6 th size of Manitoba, and contains 22.5 million people), they gave a beautiful perspective on life in both urban and rural areas. Early arrivals, who chose either the Yilan County or the Sun Moon Lake pre-conference tours on Saturday and Sunday, found how appropriate the Portuguese name "Formosa" [the beautiful island] is for this nation. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful scenery and the hospitality.





A variety of **library tours** were scheduled on Tues – Thurs. Edith visited the Kang Chiao Bilingual School library and was most impressed with the school facilities and library collection in this private school.



The official **closing ceremony** concluded the formal conference at noon on Friday. In the afternoon, the **Taipei City tour** visited a huge department / cum bookstore, oriented tourists to the city as a whole, and ended with a viewing from what is currently the tallest building in the world – Taipei Tower 101. The picture of the city by night is most spectacular.

Next year's **37 th annual conference** will be held from **03 – 06 August 2008** at San Jose State University. It will also include the 12 th International Forum on research in school librarianship. Theme for the conference will be **'WORLD CLASS LEARNING AND LITERACY THROUGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES.'** Conference co-ordinator is Blanche Woolls, and she may be reached at bwoolls@slis.sjsu.edu The conference is held at this time encourage people to attend it, then go to the Workshops on Information Literacy organized by IFLA and OSLA in Toronto, and thereafter on to IFLA conference in Quebec City from 10-15 August.





IASL conferences are a great way to meet peers from around the world who are dealing with the same issues you are. One gets to network with new friends, hear about their successes, and plan joint strategies to move the profession forward. Please put these

dates on your calendar for next year now, and plan to attend some part of them. You will be very glad that you did. You will come home inspired, refreshed and renewed.

*"Knowledge is not enough; we must apply it.
Willing is not enough; we must do it." - Goethe*

Respectfully submitted
Edith Doyle, A Founding Member of IASL 1971
Gerald Brown, Honorary Ambassador IASL, since 1997

