

# Issues and Themes in the Organisation of Information Resources

*A Festschrift in Honour of Dr. Moses Chikezie Nwosu*



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**Kingsley Nwadiuto Igwe**  
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# LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE ORGANISATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES

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## **Introduction**

The essence of organising information resources is to create quick and easy retrieval of such materials in our libraries. The depth and robustness of any library collection remain irrelevant when users cannot access such resources and/or easily retrieve materials needed from them. To this end, professionals in the library and information sectors have put in place bibliographic control rules and standards put in place to facilitate easy retrieval of library materials. Bibliographic control is a term used for the documentation of information resources pertaining to book and non-book materials, and their electronic versions to create records based on certain distinctive features of each that will allow easy access by those who need information contained in them (Nwalo, 2018). The rules for

bibliographic control were not uniform among libraries across the world from the outset. The first attempt to address universality and standard rules was the development of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR) in 1967 (Aina, 2004). But for the giant strides and efforts of library associations and institutions, through various committees and meetings in different forums, uniformity in the standard rules for bibliographic control was later made possible both in Nigeria and elsewhere.

Nationally and internationally, library and information professionals come together under various library associations and institutions to establish and promote standards that will guide librarians in properly organising their collections. Examples of such associations and institutions include the American Library Association (ALA), Library Association of the United Kingdom, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), West Africa Library Association (WALA), Nigeria Library Association (NLA), and Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), among others. At this point, we shall lay emphasis on the contributions made by the various libraries and institutions to librarianship through the organisation of information resources in libraries on a planetary scale.

### **Overview of Library Associations and Institutions**

Library Associations are professional organisations formed to bring together librarians who share common interests in subjects, types of services, or other factors. According to Library and Consortia (2021), "library associations are concerned with the principles and standards for services and sometimes for certification of professional personnel or accreditation of programmes that provide education for library professionals." Against this background, Ossai-Ugbah (2013) posits that "professional associations and institutions are a great way to gain knowledge of one's industry, network, and keep current news affecting one's industry." Library associations at different times and levels have exercised and still continue to exercise significant roles in the development and advancement of library systems. Ossai-Ugbah (2013) further avers that "each library association and institution recognise the importance of codifying and making known to the profession" and the populace the ethical rules that guide information professionals' work and practice in the provision of information services to library practitioners, library trustees, and other relevant organisations. Library associations generally set up and maintain platforms where various issues and problems regarding the libraries can be ventilated for action or mitigation. Like in other professional bodies, library associations and institutions provide invaluable assistance to the development and sustenance of a high standard of creative and innovative operations that would guarantee the resilience of the profession in several ways and under various conditions across space and time.

First and foremost, Library Associations unite and galvanise the professionals and give strength to their collective voice. Secondly, they keep their members informed of discoveries and trends in the profession through organised training programmes,

workshops, conferences, seminars, and other activities from time to time. The bottom line of putting together the aforementioned activities is to guarantee improved skills and knowledge of library professionals for the effective and continuous provision of information services. In addition, several library societies issue newsletters and publications to keep library professionals up to date on the latest news and research findings. According to Librarianship Studies & Information Technology (2020), “the list of library associations across the world’s continents (Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania) is lengthened.” On the accredited list of library associations are the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA); Commonwealth Library Association; African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA); West African Library Association (WALA); Nigerian Library Association (NLA); Botswana Library Association (BLA); Ghana Library Association; Kenya Library Association; Lesotho Library Association; The Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA); Library and Information Association of Zambia (LIAZ); Malawi Library Association (MALA); Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), formerly known as the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists (UK); Austrian Library Association; Italian Library Association; American Library Association (ALA); American Indian Library Association (AILA); Canadian Association for Information Science (CAIS-ACSI); Chinese American Librarians Association; New England Library Association and a host of others.

### **Contributions of IFLA to the Organisation of Information Resources**

Generally speaking, IFLA’s impacts and contributions to the organisation's information resources are adjudged to be of high standing in quality and significance. To this end, we shall consider IFLA and some of its outstanding contributions to the development and advancement of the profession.

#### *Overview of IFLA*

IFLA, as a foremost organisation within the ambit of library and information science, has been described as an independent, not-for-profit, non-governmental, and international organisation. IFLA is generally acknowledged as the “leading international body that represents the interests of library and information services and their patrons in addition to being the global voice of the library and information profession” (IFLA, 2011; IFLA, 2019).

IFLA was founded during the international conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1927. It marked her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in the year 2017. Currently, this global body of library and information professionals has more than one thousand, five hundred (1,500) members in over one hundred and fifty countries of the world (IFLA, 2019).

The aims of IFLA include:

- (a) promoting high-quality library and information services and professional practice, as well as easy access, protection, and preservation of documentary cultural heritage;
- (b) serving their members' interests around the world; and
- (c) fostering public, private, and voluntary sector awareness of the significance and importance of high-quality library and information services" (IFLA, 2019).

In an attempt to realise the above aims of the association, IFLA embraces four core values that include:

- i. the assumption that people, communities and organisations need total and fair access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their educational, social, cultural, democratic and economic well-being;
- ii. the endorsement of the principles of freedom of access to information, ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- iii. the commitment to enable all Members of the IFLA to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, gender, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion; and
- iv. the conviction that delivery of high-standard library and information services guarantees that access (IFLA, 2019).

IFLA in 2019 recognised within its ambit of influence two prominent voting members in terms of membership: they are Association Members and Institutional Members. Those classified as Association Members are those drawn from "associations of library and information professionals, library and information services, and educational and research institutes." Institutional membership is designed and intended for "individual library and information services, and all kinds of organisations in the library and information sector." International organisations within the domain of IFLA's interest are at liberty to join as International Association Members.

IFLA has a working relationship with more than twenty-five companies in the information sector. This great organisation has formed a friendly working synergy with several other organisations that share similar values, allowing for a frequent exchange of knowledge and opinions on topics of mutual concern. IFLA also "has formal associate ties with UNESCO and the United Nations on observer status; associate status with the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and observer status with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). In 1999, IFLA established observer status with the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

“The governing board of IFLA consists of the President, the president-elect, ten directly elected members (for every two years), and six indirectly elected members of the professional committee” (IFLA, 2019).

### **International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) and the Various Versions**

Clarke (1999) states that the decisions taken to ensure consistency and uniformity of treatment and examples are Cataloguing codes. One of the most prominent Cataloguing codes in most English-speaking countries is the International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions (ISBD). The ISBD published by IFLA is used to specify a uniform standard for the description of learning resource materials.

The International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions (ISBD) came into existence in 1969 when the IFLA Committee on Cataloguing financed an international meeting of Cataloguing professionals. “The meeting produced a resolution that recommended creating standards to regularise the form and content of bibliographic descriptions; hence, the committee on Cataloguing put into motion work that basically would serve the means for a considerable increase in the sharing and exchange of bibliographic data” (IFLA, 2006). This work developed into the concept of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD).

There are various versions of ISBD, which include “the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Monographic Publications ISBD (M); ISBD (S) for Serials; ISBD (G) for general (i.e. the revised edition of ISBD (M)); ISBD (CM) for cartographic materials, ISBD (NBM) for non-book materials, ISBD (ER) for electronic resources, and ISBD (PM) for printed music. The individual formats to which the ISBD concept has been applied were used by Cataloguers, national and multinational cataloguing codes, and bibliographic agencies in a wide variety of libraries throughout the world, because of their potential for promoting record sharing” (Saur, 2007). The elements of descriptions as contained in the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) include the following:

- i. Title and Statement of Responsibility area
- ii. Edition area
- iii. Material or type of resource-specific area
- iv. Publication, Production, Distribution, etc. area
- v. Physical description area
- vi. Series area
- vii. Note area
- viii. Resource identifier and terms of availability (IFLA, 2006)

The ISBD remained important despite the fact that it was largely driven by the computerisation of bibliographic control and the financial necessity of sharing catalogues. ISBD is also useful for bibliographic explanations of all types of resources in any kind of cataloguing, whether online or in a less technologically advanced format. “Those bodies using national and multinational cataloguing codes could apply this universally agreed-upon standard conveniently in their catalogue” (Saur, 2007).

The following objectives and principles enunciated by IFLA have guided work on the ISBD in the areas of the

- i. Provision of consistent and uniform stipulations for the description of all types of published resources, to the extent that uniformity is possible, and specific stipulations for specific types of resources are needed to describe those resources.
- ii. compilation of a consolidated, updated ISBD from the specialised ISBDs to satisfy the needs of Cataloguers and other users of bibliographic information
- iii. development of global standards for compatible descriptive cataloguing to encourage the international exchange of bibliographic records among national bibliographic agencies and the global library and information community (including producers and publishers)” IFLA, 2016).
- iv. “ISBD also accommodates different levels of description, including those needed by national bibliographic agencies, national bibliographies, universities and other research collections.
- v. The set of information elements rather than the display or use of those elements in a specific automated system provides the focus” (Library and Information Science Network, 2019).

### **Contributions of Other Library Associations**

Apart from the contributions of IFLA, the efforts and contributions of some notable library associations such as the America Library Association (ALA) and the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) are worth mentioning. These associations have brought about significant developments to the practice of the LIS profession and the information professionals in their respective domains, especially regarding the method and principles needed for bibliographic control.

### **The American Library Association (ALA)**

“The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest library in the whole world” (Ossai-Ugbah, 2013). It was established in October 1876 in Philadelphia, USA, “to provide leadership for the growth, promotion, and advancement of library and information services, as well as the profession of librarianship, in order to aid learning and ensure universal access to information” (<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/>).

The contributions of ALA in terms of standards for bibliographic control and the uniformity in the said rules are unique. Aina (2004) attests to the fact that the American Library Association (ALA), through a committee on co-operative indexing published “Condense Rules for Cataloguing” in 1878. It was a set of cataloguing rules for libraries in the USA and was approved in 1879.

Similarly, the Advisory Committee of ALA in an attempt to accommodate the Library of Congress (LC) code met and published the 4th edition of *Cutter Rules for A Dictionary Cataloguing and Library of Congress Code* in 1902. Prior to this time, there were no uniform rules for libraries in United State of America as some libraries that bought Library of Congress (LC) cards were using the LC code (Aina, 2004). In 1908, ALA collaborated with the Library Association of United Kingdom (UK) to produce a set of uniform rules for both United Kingdom and USA libraries. This was called “Anglo-American Rules”. It was also known as “Cataloguing Rules, Author and Title Entries”, the “Joint code” or “AA code”. The code aimed to create uniformity of practice in the English-speaking world. “The American Library Association, the Library Association of the United Kingdom, the Library of Congress, and the Canadian Library Association collaborated on the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR) of 1967 and the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules second edition (AACR2) of 1978” (Aina, 2004).

Interestingly, AACR2 has been updated over the years. The revisions of the second edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules were published in 1988, 1998, and 2002. The American Library Association, the Australian Committee on Cataloguing , the British Library, the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing , the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), and The Library of Congress partnered to publish the revisions of AACR2, which were called Anglo-American Cataloguing rules, 2nd Edition, 1988 Revision (AACR2R; 1988); Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd Edition, 1998 Revision (AACR2R; 1998); and Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd Edition, 2002 Revision (AACR2R; 2002). The 2002 revision included substantial changes to sections for non-book materials. Updates of the standard were also published in 2003, 2004, and 2005 (<https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/2018/12/anglo-american-cataloguing-rules-aacr.html>).

### **The Nigerian Library Association (NLA)**

The Nigerian Library Association (NLA) was established in 1962. John Harris happened to be its progenitor (Dada, 2001). NLA is the professional body for information Professionals in Nigeria. It started as a division of the West African Library Association [WALA] (Wusa, 2015).

The Nigerian Library Association has certain goals it wants to accomplish. These include the following:

- i. to bring together people who are involved in libraries, librarianship, and information services;
- ii. to protect and encourage librarians' professional interests;
- iii. to promote the creation and advancement of libraries and information centres;
- iv. to keep an eye on legislation concerning libraries and to assist in the promotion of such legislation as may be deemed appropriate for the establishment, control, and management of libraries within Nigeria.
- v. encourage and facilitate bibliographical reading, analysis, and library collaboration; and
- vi. do all lawful things that are incidental and conducive to the achievement of the objectives.

In the last fifty-eight years, the NLA has been in the forefront of the development of the library profession in Nigeria. The association has been constantly involved in capacity building through workshops, seminars and conferences for Librarians and Information Professionals. By promoting training and retraining in all aspects of librarianship, the NLA has successfully mobilized its members to be aware of global developments in the library and information field. One fundamental interest of the NLA is professional development of the information professionals. The NLA organises an annual conference intended to allow for the convergence of all Information professionals. Aina (2014) noted that NLA annually organises a national conference in which any aspect of librarianship could be focused upon in line with the themes chosen by IFLA. These conferences have huge impacts both on the profession as well as on the professionals in Library and Information field as they would have learnt new skills that will help to improve their service delivery.

According to NLA (n.d.), the association has over 5000 individual members drawn from a range of library types across Nigeria; and they typically fall into one of the thirteen (13) special interest classes. "Academic and Research Libraries (ARL) are a group of people who work in academic and research libraries; Association of Government Libraries (AGOL); Academics and Association of News Media Librarians of Nigeria (ANLON); Association of Women Librarians of Nigeria (AWLIN); Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing (CAT & CLASS); Nigerian Association of Law Libraries (NALL); National Association of Library & Information Science Educators (NALISE); Public Libraries Sections (PLS); Information Technology Section (ITS); Nigerian School Library Association (NSLA); Association of Libraries for Visually Handicapped (ALVH); Preservation and Conservation Section (PCS); and Medical Libraries Section (MLS)."

The NLA, through the Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section (Cat & Class), has contributed immensely in promoting best practices for organising information resources for the past 39 years. The section organises seminars/workshops annually for NLA members. Their annual seminars have been of help to the practitioners. Through the themes of various years, members' skills for bibliographic control have improved. In fact, there has been a continuation of the interesting theme of a particular year in the following year. For instance, Adeleke (2018) affirms that responses to a post-workshop evaluation revealed that participants of the edition held in 2017 would want the topic repeated in future. This brought about the continuation of the 37<sup>th</sup> edition in the year 2018.

Apart from the twenty-eight annual seminars/works previously held (from 1980 to 2008), records show that from 2009 to 2019 Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section of NLA has organised eleven (11) annual seminars/workshops. The themes for each of the years include the following: "Back to the basics of bibliographic control work" 39<sup>th</sup> ed.; "Re-skilling bibliographic workers for digital age: a reload" 38<sup>th</sup> ed.; "Re-skilling bibliographic workers for digital age" 37<sup>th</sup> ed.; "Implementing RDA in Nigerian libraries: practical steps towards visibility" 36<sup>th</sup> ed.; "Future Cataloguers: changing rules, changing roles" 35<sup>th</sup> ed.; "Current cataloguing practices and the status of the cataloguing in Nigerian libraries" 34<sup>th</sup> ed.; "Towards a national union cataloguing: challenges, opportunities, pathways" 33<sup>rd</sup> ed.; "Repositioning the cataloguing for information management in a networked environment" 32<sup>nd</sup> ed.; "New directions in cataloguing and metadata management" 31<sup>st</sup> ed.; "Innovative services and the future: challenges for Cataloguers" 30<sup>th</sup> ed.; and "Knowledge access management, tools and concepts for next generation of Cataloguers" 29<sup>th</sup> ed. (Nigerian Library Association, 2018).

### **Contributions of National Libraries of Countries**

National libraries in different countries of the world have made remarkable impacts towards the development of the best practices among information professionals on one hand, and the betterment of the entire populace on the other. Their contributions include preservation of culture, promotion of literacy, eradication of poverty and others, thereby touching lives positively and creating informed societies. Two of the national libraries of countries shall be discussed here. These are: National Library of Nigeria (NLN) and National Library of South Africa (NLSA).

#### **National Library of Nigeria (NLN)**

The National Library of Nigeria (NLN) is the apex library in Nigeria, and it was established in September 1964 to acquire, process, organise, disseminate, as well as provide links to information resources to all Nigerians for their educational pursuits and informed decision making. "It is the nation's vast memory, its intellectual vault and data bank for the learning and remembering process. Without a doubt, the National Library of Nigeria (NLN) is at the forefront of library growth and service delivery, advising institutions, associations, ministries, departments, and agencies at all levels of government on library development" (<https://www.nln.gov.ng/history>).

The Library System of NLN is divided into seven (7) major departments, namely: Planning, Research & Statistics Department (PRSD), National Bibliographic Control Department (NBCD), Collection Development and Processing Department (CDPD), Virtual Library Service Department (VLSD), Public Service Department (PSD), Human Resources and Administrative Department, and Finance and Account Department.

The objectives of the National Library of Nigeria include the following:

- to provide for the nation a source of intellectual support and stimulus for advancement in all fields of human endeavour, particularly in academic, social, cultural, scientific and technological enterprise;
- to provide a comprehensive and rich collection for reference and research in all fields within and beyond the nation's physical boundaries; and
- to ensure for the nation a place in the community of nations which depend on knowledge and original ideas for survival.

Some of the contributions of the National Library of Nigeria include the following:

- i. NLN promotes readership through campaigns.
- ii. It serves as the focal platform for National Bibliographic Control Services aimed at Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and Universal Availability of Publications (UAP).
- iii. It also serves as the National Agency for the administration and management of International Standard Numbers for Monographs, Serials and Musical works – ISSN, ISBN and ISMN
- iv. NLN also ensures regular production of the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN) on an annual basis.
- v. It helps to preserve and conserve information Resources.
- vi. NLN also protects the interests of publishers/clients by responding to subpoenas in respect of litigations.

### **National Library of South Africa (NLSA)**

The National Library of South Africa (NLSA) was established on 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1999 as a result of the amalgamation of the South African Library in Cape Town and the State Library in Pretoria ([https://www.nlsa.ac.za/?page\\_id=25](https://www.nlsa.ac.za/?page_id=25)). It is mandated by Act 92 of 1998 (the National South Africa Act) to collect and preserve published documents and make them accessible to all and extended to posterity.

The contributions of the National Library of South Africa in terms of introductions of series of programmes to the people, especially the young adults, in order to solve challenges of high levels of illiteracy, unemployment, gender inequality, poverty and a host of others are notable. These great efforts have indeed supported parts of the United Nations' Sustainable

Development Goals. For instance, Maepa and Marumo (2016) posit that the National Library of South Africa helps to provide free access to ICT's, reading and research spaces and workshops organised for young adults.

NLSA also helps to serve humanity and ensures that all South Africans have access to information so that everyone can enjoy a better quality of life and function effectively in a rapidly transforming society; through their strategic resource centre that is rich with heritage and knowledge sources which are made accessible to people from different backgrounds, even remotely (Maepa & Marumo, 2016).

National Library of South Africa serves as a social united place. By this, it promotes peaceful co-existence among South Africans. Maepa and Marumo (2016) attest to the fact that South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) persistently holds exhibitions during election times and conducts voters' education campaigns on the NLSA's premises.

### **Summary**

Library Associations and Institutions have made tremendous contributions to the development and advancement to the standardisation and professionalization of library and information science at different levels despite the information and communication technology-driven landscape of operations. The impact of the synergy between local and international library associations is readily seen in the standardisation and democratisation of access to information for learning and general improvement in quality of life on a planetary scale. The sustenance of the ideals of these associations and the already entrenched training and retraining of the practitioners in the profession will, without a doubt, guarantee the required resilience to satisfy the information requirements of our growing population of smart library users.

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