

Görüşler / *Opinion Papers*

International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL): Promoting Science and Technology Librarianship in the Changing Library Landscape

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Abstract

International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL) has been in the forefront of providing leadership to information professionals and promoting science and Technology librarianship in today's changing library landscape. The present article is an attempt to comprehend the present status of IATUL and analyze the activities and contribution it has made to overcome the range of challenges facing by tertiary level Technological libraries throughout the world. The SWOT analysis method is used to assess the achievements of IATUL, failures and ascertain constraints being faced in this internet age. The author relied on web sites as well as ephemeral material such as minutes, annual reports, newsletters, and memoranda to construct this article. Meeting and Interview with IATUL present and past presidents and other office bearers of the associations provided useful sources of information. It is also attempted to provide relevant information for those interested to join IATUL for professional development.

Keywords: *IATUL, ICT and Professional development, SWOT analysis, Science and Technology Librarianship, Professional associations*

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Background

The International Association of Technological University Libraries (Hereafter IATUL) was founded at Dusseldorf, Germany, in May 1955 and since then it has been playing an important role in conveying useful messages and guidelines for technological libraries development worldwide. Moreover, in this transitional era IATUL is acting as meeting places for professionals, helping them exchange opinions and promoting free access to information while facing a series of structural, political, cultural and financial challenges. In essence, a professional association provides a framework within which individuals belonging to a particular profession seek to practice their profession. It also sets standards to be followed in all aspects viz. education, up-lifting the professional status, certification, code of conduct etc. As the freedom of information and open access become a reality there is a wide spread recognition about the role of library associations in educating and empowering the professional communities. Traditional bureaucratic hierarchical models of library associations have been heavily criticized as being too inflexible to deliver products and services. The library and information profession is facing a crisis and there is an urgent need to modernize its associations and make them more effective and caring about the members.

Today IATUL has to:

- provide a leading role in discussions about open access to information, user rights, freedom of expression, management of intellectual property and the problems of copyright
- promote the development and advancement of the profession and
- encourage membership participation.

The basic mission of any library association is to develop products and services which offer practical solutions to the problems of this fast changing world; to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library services; to promote excellence through continuing education program, publications, communications and awards, and to undertake other such innovative program. The purpose is to develop, expand and enhance the professional knowledge and status of the profession. Library associations are seen as relevant sources of information and knowledge sharing and a way to make contacts with other like-minded institutions, furthermore it provides informal settings for information sharing. Like other professional associations, library associations have always been the means to unify the profession and to improve their members' training and performance standards. One of the prime activities of professional associations is to create variety of venues for the discussion of issues.

Current Status

IATUL is a voluntary international non-governmental organization of libraries works in close cooperation with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI). In September 1955, IATUL was recognized as a subsection within The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). It now works in association with the IFLA Section of Science and Technology Libraries.

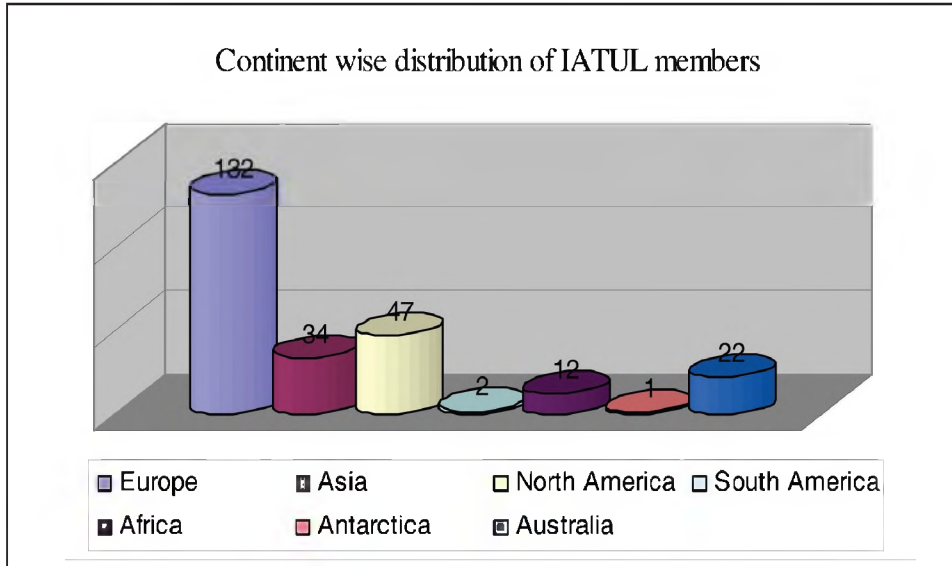
In 1990 IATUL was formally affiliated with UNESCO. This affiliation operates now through IFLA. Since 1999, IATUL is also a member of ICSTI. IATUL General Assembly meetings take place once a year and the Board consists of a president, the immediate past president, a secretary, a treasure and two vice presidents as well as five members. The board members are selected from different regions to cover a wide geographical area. (For more information please view the IATUL web page at <http://iatul.org/about>)

In 1955 there were 34 libraries affiliated to IATUL in 14 countries and by 1966 the number had already increased to 93 libraries in 30 countries (Schmidmaier, 1995). The current membership of IATUL spreads over forty six countries and the total membership is two hundred and fifty libraries.

IATUL membership is institutional with a senior library manager nominated as contact for the institution. Membership is based on the calendar year. There are four categories of membership:

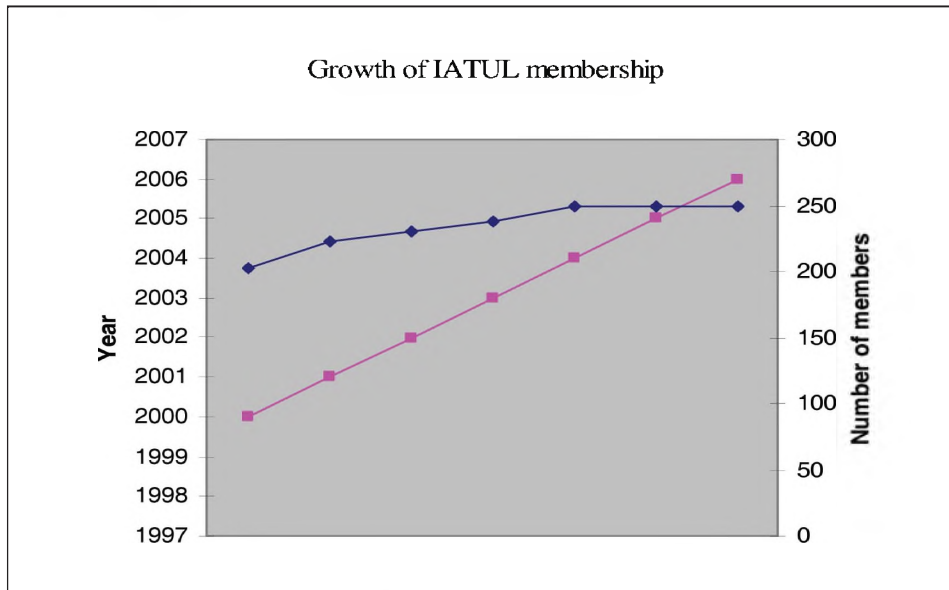
- Ordinary Membership
- Associate Membership
- Sustaining Membership
- Honorary Membership.

The first three categories are institutional while Honorary membership is for individuals who have served the association, or international librarianship, with particular distinction.



(Chart 1): Continent wise distribution of IATUL membership (2006-2007)

Chart 1 shows that IATUL is predominantly European. There is a sharp increase in memberships as may be observed on Chart 2 below. Today the membership spreads over 50 countries.



(Chart 2): Growth of IATUL membership during 2000-2007

One of the shortcomings of the membership policy is absence of personal/individual membership. Any information professional or librarian who has a strong interest in international librarianship can't join IATUL as a personal member. However, truly global association like IFLA accepts individual membership. This side door allows a new librarian immediate and direct exposure to a wide range of international perspectives.

The Changing Landscape of Professional Development in The Knowledge Age

Open Access is a significant movement on the library landscape which is generating much passion and enthusiasm in the profession. The challenge of creating good communication between an association, its members and new professionals need to be addressed more prominently in this knowledge age. Today library associations have to provide the leading role in discussions on management of intellectual property, open access archiving, user rights, freedom of expression, and problems of copyright which will finally determine the success of the information profession. Recently eight major North American associations representing a vast majority of American and Canadian libraries are supporting open access:

- American Association of Law Libraries (<http://www.aallnet.org/>)
- American Library Association (<http://www.ala.org/>)
- Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries <http://www.aahsl.org/>
- Association of College & Research Libraries (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/>)
- Association of Research Libraries (<http://www.arl.org/>)
- Medical Library Association (<http://www.mlanet.org/>)
- Special Libraries Association (<http://www.sla.org/>)
- Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (<http://www.arl.org/sparc/>)

In a review of the literature, Ryan, Hanrahan and Duncan (2000) found that "professional development that is supported at the local level by staff with the appropriate background in terms of discipline knowledge is likely to be more relevant and productive than a centralized, de contextualized approach"

Contribution made by IATUL in the development of Science and Technology Librarianship

As the global information age becomes a reality there is a widespread recognition about the role of library associations in educating and empowering profes-

sional communities, which holds that traditional bureaucratic hierarchical models of library associations are rightly criticized as too inflexible to deliver products and services Michel Pigeon, Rector of Université Laval in his inaugural address at the 26th annual conference said "IATUL network is very important to us, by its affiliation to UNESCO on the one hand, but also, on the other hand, because of the focus it puts on the progress of librarianship in the context of the accelerated progress of a worldwide knowledge society, based on the growing development of communication and information"

To quote Mara (1995): "The influence of IATUL on the development of technical librarianship in Slovenia and in former Yugoslavia is incontestable and it is my opinion that our cooperation with IATUL was to a certain extent useful also for IATUL's members. These members came from countries with different political systems so, at that time, Yugoslavia as a co-founder of the non-aligned movement was an interesting case. Through papers presented at conferences and Board meetings, IATUL members were kept updated with the system of university technical libraries and information centers in Yugoslavia; they could follow the progress of students' education as users of scientific information; they heard about experience gained by the CTK (Centralna tehniška knjižnica Univerze v Ljubljani) consulting service as a basis for forming the library-information system of CTK in cooperation with faculty and special libraries in Slovenia; they learnt about dilemmas arising from making domestic databases; information on CTK's experience in supplying documents and scientific information to users from industry was presented, and IATUL members were acquainted with CTK's contribution to universal availability of serials".

IATUL provides members with:

1. A network of colleagues throughout the world;
2. IATUL Alert, a monthly email bulletin
3. Discount registration to the annual IATUL conference;
4. A copy of the conference proceedings on CD-ROM;
5. Access to IATUL-l, the association's discussion list for staff of the IATUL member institutions and allows to:
 - Ask the group for ideas for service innovation or management
 - Share information about developments at your library or in your country, of interest to members
 - Ask about the group's experiences regarding changes you are considering
6. IATUL News that lists useful items on the website.

Quality publications of associations can have deep impact on professionals and considered an important tool to empower the professional communities. Elin Törmudd (1995) opined "*IATUL Proceedings* which has evolved through different forms, including five years as a journal, *IATUL Quarterly* from 1987 to 1991, is a treasury for retrospective studies. There are sources for comprehensive studies of the development of library management and technology as well as for biographical research". *IATUL Proceedings* has been very well covered by abstract and index services in the field of information provision, such as *Library and information science abstract (LISA)*, *Library literature* and has been accessible through search engines viz. Google scholar.

As one of the benefits of membership, IATUL works with Eduserv, a UK not-for-profit company to provide preferential subscription rates to a range of online databases and software, including Reuters Business Insight Unlimited; Data monitor, Business Information Centre; Emerald Abstracts and Fulltext; IEE Online; Inspec; and Knovel.

Annual Conferences

IATUL is the key international conference to attend in order to stay abreast of developments and trends in Science and Technological libraries around the world. The general aim of the IATUL annual conference is to provide members and other interested professionals the opportunity to discuss issues facing tertiary education libraries and highlight several important issues and challenges that Science and Technological libraries are facing worldwide.

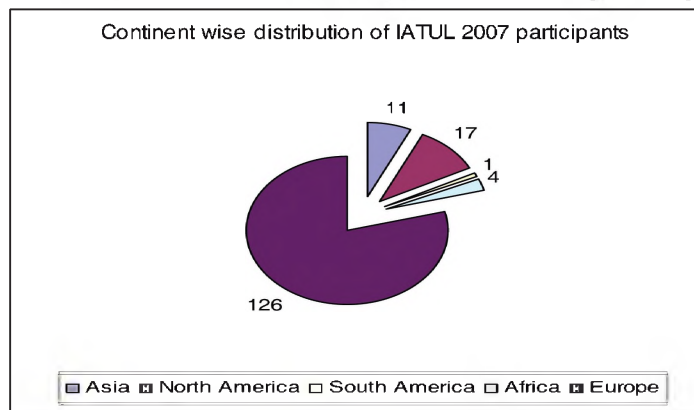
(Table 1): IATUL conferences from 1995-2008: themes and distribution of meeting places

<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Place</i>
1995	16 th conference on Resource management	University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands
1996	17 th Networks, Networking and Implications for digital libraries	University of California, USA
1997	18 th Scholarly Communication in Focus	NTNU, Trondheim, Norway
1998	19 th The Challenge to be relevant in the 21 st Century	University of Pretoria, South Africa
1999	20 th The future of libraries in human communication	Technical University of Crete, Greece
2000	21 st Virtual libraries, Virtual Communities	Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia
2001	22 nd Stratum continuum of information	Delft University of Technology Library, Delft, the Netherlands.
2002	23 rd Partnerships ,consortia and 21 st century library service	Jointly held by the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering and Technology, and the University of Missouri, Kansas City, USA
2003	24 th libraries and education in the networked information environment	Middle Eastern Technical University, Ankara , Turkey
2004	25 th library management in changing environment	KraKow University of Technology, KraKow, Poland,
2005	26 th Information and Innovation	University of Laval, Quebec city, Canada
2006	27 th Embedding libraries in learning and research	University of Minho, Porto, Portugal
2007	28 th Global access to science: Scientific publishing for the future http://www.lib.kth.se/IATUL/	Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
2008	29 th digital discovery: strategies & solutions http://www.aut.ac.nz/iatul2008/	AUT University Auckland, New Zealand on 21-24 April 2008.

In order to increase the number and range of countries that participate in IATUL conferences IATUL operates an annual Travel Grant Program to assist first-time attendees at the IATUL Conference who are from outside of the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and EU countries. The prime objective is to encourage participation by institutions that are currently not members of IATUL. Travel grantees are selected among the professionals whose library is qualified for getting membership in IATUL. So far they have been from India and South Africa, Bangladesh and Jamaica.

As seen from Table 1, each year a different and current theme is addressed, this year's theme was The theme in 2007 focused on many aspects of scholarly communication, open source, intellectual property, institutional repositories, e-science, e-publishing and in particular open access movement and initiatives in different parts of the world. The conference took place at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden in 11-14th June. A total of 33 speakers made presentations in 11 parallel sessions, which flowed seamlessly from one topic to another. Four keynote speakers addressed delegates in plenary sessions. Conference delegates also had the opportunity to visit the National Library of Sweden, the Uppsala University main library known as Carolina Rediviva, the Uppsala Cathedral and Museum.

Sweden has been involved in IATUL activity previously. As Marie Heijne (2007) states, "IATUL and Sweden have a long history together. There is a broad membership from Sweden and Nancy Fjallbrant.....acted in the 90's a very active chair of IATUL for several years. Also there have been many board members from other universities in Sweden". As stated earlier, open access and digital repositories were widely discussed during the conference. Other topics were: communication value chain, digital object identifier (DOI), public access to publicly funded research, e-research infrastructures and scientific communication, new metaphors in scientific communication, literature mining, among others.



(Chart 3) : Continent wise distribution of IATUL participants (2007)

26th IATUL conference and 50 years of IATUL

This was the first time in IATUL's 50 year history that the conference met in Canada, hosted at University of Laval, Quebec City. The conference program addressed major issues like Infrastructure, People and innovation initiatives in Science and Technological University Libraries Worldwide. The delegates and members stressed the importance of global collaboration and exchanged ideas and research experiences including crucial information needs of users in their institutions. Fortunately the author was one of the IATUL travel grantee for the year 2005 and it seemed that it's a conference always worth attending.

The 26th annual conference was attended by 116 participants from 26 countries. Its informality and the fact that publishers, vendors, and Information Professionals are together in the same place, no exhibits, no high volume sales pitches, just talking about issues that concern all of us, and the value of the conference attracted the attention of senior managers, library Directors, Deans as well as young professionals responsible for information services and resources management. Moreover, it was a good opportunity to listen to experts and practitioners from North America and discuss various issues and problems we are facing in Asia.

Michel Pigeon (2005), Rector of University of Laval in his inaugural address declared that "Information and Innovation", is an appropriate theme which will advance understanding about the relationship between the creation, the publication and the use of scientific information and the innovation agendas of governments, industry and universities worldwide. He further stated that "It is the occasion to explore the relationship between the advancement of knowledge and the advancement of society, to see how it reinforces and strengthens the innovation capacity of communities at the local, regional and national levels".

Previous annual conferences have been held world wide ; however, it is very clear that the countries and regions of the world are very unequally represented at the IATUL meetings. Table 2 shows clearly that participants were mostly from North America and Europe; while only two and three participants were respectively from Asia and Africa. Finally, New Zealand alone represented the Asia-Pacific region.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis allows the identification of needs, potential problems and issues, and plays an important part in strategic planning. The strengths and weaknesses are within the service provided to the members -for example, their range of publications. On the other hand opportunities and threats come from outside the service- for example, funding or changes in the memberships. Before any progress can be made, information about the opportunities and threats facing the associations from outside must be discovered. Information in this regard can be obtained by checking the current trends in the profession and changing needs of members. IATUL's strategy must be prepared to meet challenges faced by members as well as, to fulfill the demands arise due to fast changing library landscape. The purpose of the SWOT is to identify (and pursue) opportunities that play to strengths, minimize weaknesses and take into account potential threats. However, it is very difficult to prove these value statements since many of these activities are relatively intangible. IATUL members face dramatic changes in this digital era as well as significant opportunities and must position themselves to thrive in the new environment.

(Table 3): SWOT analysis applied to IATUL

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>1. The IATUL is the only international level representative of Technological University libraries. The main objective of IATUL is to provide a forum where library directors and senior managers can meet to exchange views on matters of current significance and to provide an opportunity for them to develop a collaborative approach to solving problems.</p> <p>2. The IATUL Conferences are well known professional forums, where the most critical issues dealing with the development and strengthening</p>	<p>1. One of the major weaknesses of the IATUL is that it has not sufficiently responded to members' changing needs, assuming that its services remain wholly relevant.</p> <p>2. Lack of local visibility and advocacy and lack of strategic networking with other groups. Non-representation of huge percentage of professionals - many non-members have never been approached to join up and are largely unaware of the organization. Proper networks need to be created.</p> <p>3. Restrictive access to newsletters; online</p>

cooperation among Technological University libraries are discussed. Moreover it's a forum for dialog among high level information professionals serving in various institutions throughout the world and develop strategies for practical implementation. IATUL has been successful in providing such a forum during the last twenty-five years.

3. Roles and functions are clearly and formally recorded in its publicly available websites.

4. Strengths identified are membership-based, i.e. senior level involvement, vocational commitment and membership expertise. Another key strength is the number of distributed alternative access points which means that members do not have to travel to get the services of the Association.

access only to the members. Emphasis mostly on formal activities i.e. mainly conferences; information published sometimes not rated highly by members.

4. IATUL is lacking a pro-active approach to motivate the non members to join the association.

5. IATUL's literary contribution to the library profession is considered poor, because publications are sadly lacking.

6. There is no vision statement available in the website.

Opportunities

1. IATUL should organize virtual conferences and workshops and must go for international cooperation and participate in international professional events.

2. Opportunities open to IATUL to assert the potentially central role of the profession in a changed environment variously referred to as the information age or the information society.

3. Developing an interactive personalized Portal and integrated service delivery to include web form, e-mail, phone and chat. The Web site should provide innovative ways of delivering services such as virtual tours or subject-specific tutorials that present information for a particular class of professionals.

4. There is a need for IATUL to publish official journals in the pattern of IFLA journal with reflective articles.

Threats

1. The cooperation and understanding of members is not very high and shortage of funds is a real headache. Financial constraints and lack of permanent HQ are difficulties.

2. IATUL has limited networking capacity, particularly in key areas such as on-going professional development and this, in turn, limits what we refer to as its professional currency.

IATUL is the only Technological University Libraries Association at international level, and the author's observation and available data suggests that the IATUL has both weaknesses and strengths and the greater levels of opportunity than threat. The strength of any library association lies in its continuing ability to react flexibly to new challenges and create sufficient infrastructure to accommodate changes. The primary need is to provide an analysis of the contemporary situation on a continuous basis rather than as something that starts and then falls into neglect. IATUL is now facing some of its greatest threats and potentially most rewarding opportunities. A central theme in both these threats and opportunities is the changing profession and the need for professionals to reengineer themselves to meet the information-intensive demands.

Observations and Recommendations

Due to changing nature of librarianship resulting from the increasing amount of information available in digital format, educating digital librarians has become an important agenda for professional library associations. The literature review reveals that library associations worldwide face numerous challenges as they attempt to address different concerns in a fast changing knowledge society. Today we are in a transitional era therefore it is difficult to understand fully the professional challenges confronted at various levels, and there is an urgent need to modernize professional associations to make them more effective and caring about professionals. Membership of associations is a prerequisite for professional growth and development. However, this source of revenue continues to decrease as members dues increase and as membership numbers decline. When members do not consider themselves to be receiving value for money they exercise the option not to join or withdraw. In response, professional associations must identify and generate revenues from sources other than membership fees. Often this comes from corporate sponsorship, advertising and other direct fund raising activities. In order to avoid losing membership, IATUL should demonstrate the benefits it can deliver.

From its modest beginning in 1927 as a kind of club of library associations and directors of major libraries in Europe and North America, IFLA has developed into a worldwide network of library associations, libraries, and librarians, exchanging information, developing guidelines to good practice and influencing the world's decision making bodies in the service of libraries and their users (Simmon, 2003). Today IFLA is considered as truly international federation of libraries with 1700 members from 150 countries. But IATUL is still predominantly European with a handful of members representing from Asia and Africa. According to Shaw (1995) the medium for communication between the IATUL

Board and the membership at large is highly inadequate.

Today the library profession is facing a crisis and there is an urgent need to modernize the profession's associations and make them more effective and caring about the members. The need of the hour is the library as a place for learning, information and communication within the professional environment, creating networks and reaching out to the clientele as well other professionals. Packing and evaluating information as well education for information literacy will be of high priority to determine the success of the profession. Because it will be less important to deliver comprehensive information sources than selecting those which are relevant for the clientele in all formats and possibilities as an ongoing process is needed. Today, it become inevitable that international library associations like IATUL should persuade and motivate its member organizations so that they agree to lend their support to open access and mandate open access self-archiving in their respective institute.

The following are the recommendations for IATUL to function more successfully:

- It is suggested that the IATUL needs to re-present itself as an open, proactive, participative organization representing a progressive profession and need to work for greater levels of co-operation within the library profession.
- There is need to build internal and external connections between sectors, regional, national professional bodies and educational providers, as well as other international level associations; it is predominantly European in membership with very few Asian and African members included. Also, IATUL is required to add more international components.
- IATUL ordinary membership is open only to Institutions and libraries teaching Masters or Doctorate level courses and there is no scope for individual librarians/ information managers to get a membership. Provision is to be made in this regard.
- There is need to encourage more interactions among IATUL members and for greater involvement in the association's activities by members. The IATUL should be a member-led institution, one which encourages members to contribute to its development. Dissemination channels used for knowledge sharing at present are mostly formal and are geared towards getting members to maintain the status quo. IATUL can offer practical recommendations for the design and provision of CPD programmes especially for the professionals in developing countries.
- A substantial number of IATUL members gather only in annual conferences; to bring it up to par with other international associations, IATUL should offer a mid term program on the pattern of IFLA.
- Developing realistic strategies would see an increase in membership, expand and reinvent the associations in the context of pervasive convergence

technologies, unifying them over a boundary-less, organic network with a uniform interface. Given the present state of ICT it is possible to contemplate new methods for discussion, exchange and participatory relationship aimed at supporting and developing links through conscious and controlled use of such technology.

- IATUL publications (which are housed in different places) other than conference proceedings are not available in the website, initiatives in this regard should be taken to make IATUL collections accessible through an open access digital repository accessible through IATUL home page.
- Providing guidelines/directions for young professionals

Conclusion

This empirical study used a variety of methods to present a clear picture of IATUL as an organization ; its contribution to science and technological library development throughout the world. The literature review ed revealed that availability of publication on IATUL is insignificant when compared to other international library associations such as IFLA, ALA or SLA.

The author hopes to have presented a useful summary of the issues and challenges that science and technological libraries are facing due to rapid changes in the information sector following technological push, obsolescence of initial professional qualifications and societal evolutions, and how IATUL is addressing these through annual conferences, website information and LIS forum discussion, to cite the main means. This paper also aims at reflecting the author's experiences of the two IATUL conferences she has attended in 2005 and 2007 at Quebec city, Canada and Stockholm, Sweden.

This article is dedicated to the loving memory of my late grandmother Mrs. Shibani Sinha

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