

## Presentation

**L**atin America libraries, like many other ones from different parts of the world, face at the present time several challenges, as product of the economic, social, and technological conditions in which they are immersed. In many of them, it is possible to perceive changes and adjustments to new forms for delivering services. Use of information and the communication technology (ICT) has become an essential element for the organization and representation of their collections in catalogs, now denominated information portals and gateways. Access to library resources has been improved with the possibility of having not only printed material but also electronic resources, most of them available from remote access. Nevertheless, reading promotion for developing reflection and creative thought of individuals continues being one of the key missions for library services.

In order to have a first approach to the way in which Latin America libraries are facing current challenges in their activities and services, the coordinators of this publication carried out the assignment of identifying and selecting representative cases in the core library activities and functions. The task was not easy, because success cases in Latin America library activities and services are numerous. For the selection of representative cases, we considered these should correspond to the basic library functions and activities they have had performed and that they will continue playing in the future. In this way, there were selected three cases; one dealing with cataloging, another one on a digital library creation and one more about reading promotion.

Ana Lupe Cristán, from the U. S. A. Library of the Congress, in her work "Library of Congress reaches out to the Latin America library community," emphasizes the importance of collaboration and cooperation in cataloging, doing reference to the role that the Library of the Congress (LC) has played throughout the time, since the printed cards distribution, at the beginning of the past century, until the VIAF (Virtual Authority File) project in our days. Also, she points out the importance of cataloguing meetings that have had place in Latin America, where catalogers had discussed pro-

blems and challenges related to the new cataloguing code (RDA) adoption in their libraries.

Marcia Rosetto and Aparecida da Graça Guimarães in their contribution "Virtual Library of Latin America, BV@L," display the results of a project that would be considered as a new space for the convergence and diffusion of information on the Latin American region. The main objectives of the project reported in their work are: to disseminate information and knowledge about Latin America concerning Humanities, Sciences and Arts produced by the "Memorial da América Latina;" to organize and to disseminate information resources about the region which are available in the "Memorial da América Latina" holdings and on the Internet –at national, regional and international levels; to apply qualified mechanisms of access, retrieval and dissemination of cultural, artistic and technical-scientific production obtained from teaching, research and cultural extension from the representative institutions of this area.

Nítida Carranza and Denice Adkins in their work "Promoting reading in Tegucigalpa public schools with bookmobiles," give account of a program where reading resources are facilitated to children from schools and other education centers. Program activities motivates to them to use reading resources and to take advantage of the opportu-

nities they bring for creative, mental, and imaginative involvement and to have learning experiences that can help them for all their life, through reading. Also, the authors point out the involvement of students from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional “Francisco Morazán” as active actors in the reading promotion.

Under the sponsorship of REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (U.S.A.), the Latin America and the Caribbean Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA/LAC), and the American Library Association (ALA), these works were presented, in their English versions, in the ALA Annual Conference, celebrated from June 24 to 29, in Washington, D.C. The objective of this presentation was the Latin America librarians had the opportunity to show their American colleagues serving to Latino and Spanish speaking communities, representative and innovative cases of library services developed in Latin America countries, fostering in this way, an experience interchange on these issues.

Taking into account these cases would also be of interest for Library and Information Science scholars, professors and students from Latin America countries, a Spanish version of their works was

asked to the authors to integrate a bilingual publication. We take care of the coordination, harmonization, edition and review work of the English and Spanish versions for this publication. This bilingual publication represents an effort to spread to global level the way in which Latin America librarians are facing the challenges that the current social, economic and technological condition have brought. It is our hope this publication motivates other librarians to research and to publish other similar cases and experiences.

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