Workshop 4
Tuesday, 28 May 2024, 15:30-17:30
time zone Athens, Greece

Title
Rethinking library collaboration in public libraries: exploring possible consortia solutions

Coordinators
Dr Milena Dobreva, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland
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Thalia Gonda, Department of Archives, Library Science, and Museology, Ionian University, Corfu, Greece

Brief description
The workshop will be an interactive event which aims to discuss how the changes in the information environment impact the services of public libraries and what models for collaboration can support the ongoing transformation of the sector.

All over the world, libraries of all types come together, uniting their forces by creating communication networks, partnerships, and consortia to cope with the ever-increasing user demands, the systematically decreasing budgets, and the complex social and technological environment. Especially for the academic libraries, forming and participating in a consortium was part of their answer to the explosion in the number of scientific publications due to the transition from the print journals to the electronic ones. Of course, academic library consortia offer more than ‘big deals’ with the publishers and expand their services to shared library systems and catalogues, interlibrary lending, digitization projects and more.

So, academic library consortia have received a lot of attention and have been studied extensively. The same does not occur for public library consortia. One reason is that public libraries participate in
consortia along with other types of libraries, mainly with academic libraries. Another reason is that in several parts of the world public library consortia are not always a predominant practice and public libraries either collaborate informally (e.g., through networks), or they do not cooperate at all.

Undoubtedly, public libraries would also benefit from forming alliances. The aim of this workshop is to open a discussion about which areas public libraries would need assistance that a consortium could offer, which services consortia could provide to their library members and which types or models of collaboration would better support public libraries.

**Structure of the discussion**

Introduction of the topic, its importance and lessons learned from academic libraries consortia. Open innovation as part of the transformative experiences. Colleagues from public library consortia share their experiences. Open discussion around the questions:

- Which services the consortia could offer (in general) to their members?
- Which factors are crucial to each service?
- What constitutes a good governance model?
- What collaboration models exist and what are their attributes?

**Duration** 2 hours

**Target audience**

Consortia experts, public librarians, administrators, public libraries stakeholders

**Outcomes**

The participants –either panel or audience- will apprehend better what collaborations in the library landscape look like, the important role they play in everyday library business, what good governance models are, and how they can contribute to their library’s relationships and alliances.

**Equipment for participating virtually.**
Milena Dobreva is a Senior Lecturer in Information Behaviour at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, UK. Her main research interest is exploring innovation diffusion processes within the cultural and scientific heritage sectors. Within this domain, she contributed to EC-commissioned technology watch reports and coordinated research exploring user needs and behaviours within the digital heritage domain. I am also spearheading innovative research in media and information literacy and the societal impacts of misinformation/disinformation.

Christos Papatheodorou is a Professor in the Dept. of History and Philosophy of Science at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, since 2020. Previously (2002-2020), he was a Professor at the Dept. of Archives, Library Sciences, and Museology, Ionian University, Corfu, Greece. His research interests include Digital Humanities, Metadata interoperability, Digital Curation and Preservation, e-Science, Evaluation of Digital Libraries and Information Services. He is an Editor of the International Journal of Metadata, Semantics and Ontologies.

Thalia Gonda is an Archivist - Librarian at the Ionian University Library and Information Centre, Corfu, Greece. She holds an M.Sc. in Information Science. She is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Archives, Library Science and Museology, Ionian University, Corfu, Greece. Her research focuses on public libraries' cooperation.