

IFLA Big Data Special Interest Group (SIG) report 2017/8

IT Section SC1 Meeting, Friday 24 August 2018

The activities of the SIG during the past 12 months can be summarized into three main areas of activity:

1. Keeping abreast with IMLS-funded data projects

The innovation and development in data-related scientific endeavors are mostly happening in the space of the Information Science schools (or so-called “iSchools”). Many research projects in USA-based iSchools are funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), of which two in particular are of particular relevance for the focus areas of the SIG:

- The *Data Science in Libraries Project*, led by the School of Computing & Information, University of Pittsburgh, explores the challenges associated with implementing data science within diverse library environments by examining the “skills gap” of both librarians and library managers when dealing with the delivery of data-intensive collections and services. The relevance of the work of the SIG applies to skills building in terms of general data literacy and “data savviness”. The SIG convener co-organized a Data Carpentry workshop to get a practical hands-on feel for what is involved in this area of skills development and curricula.
- The *Collections as Data* project which aims to produce “a collections as data” framework and functional requirements that support library collections as data infrastructure development. The research work is mostly applied to areas in the digital humanities, history, journalism, art and social sciences. The relevance to the work of the SIG applies to the reuse of library data for renewed scrutiny using digital scientific discovery techniques.

2. Coordinate participation in information sharing events

Participation in the following professional events were organized:

- An attempt at a WLIC 2018 satellite meeting for Wednesday 22 August and/or Thursday 23 August, co-hosted by the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. The planning for this event was cancelled due to a clash with the Malayan “Hari Raya Haji” public holiday on the same date (22/08).
- A business meeting and open session at WLIC 2018 on Wednesday 29 August, 12:00 – 13:00.

- A session on *Libraries' Application of Data Intelligence* at the CODATA and RD-Alliance organized SciDataCon2018 event in Gaborone, Botswana, as part of International Data Week 2018 (IDW2018).

3. Doing research into Library Analytics

Library Analytics is a growing field of statistical analysis of mainly library transactional data, and some of the same tools, concepts and techniques used in Big Data analysis are applicable to library data analysis. An exploration of the various library dashboard products, and library sources for statistical analysis, is currently being undertaken.

Challenges and shortcomings

It remains a challenge to effectively share and communicate the assimilated information gained to a broader audience for comment and review. This requires time to write-up and share for commentary using an appropriate platform like a blog. More work needs to be done in this area.

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