



## Internet Manifesto Revision Principles Paper

6 November 2023

*In 2023 IFLA is preparing a revised Internet Manifesto. This manifesto will be the fourth statement from IFLA in the area of Internet Governance, as libraries pivot to adapt to the changing nature of information delivery over the Internet.*

*Two previous manifestos were published in [2002](#) and [2014](#) respectively, and with the same focus on outlining not just good practices in the library and information services field in regard to the Internet, but also with providing a clear and unified voice for librarians in advocating for Internet-related policies and issues. A guidelines document was also published in [2006](#) in collaboration with UNESCO, that intended to offer guidance to library and information professionals, policymakers, and politicians in drawing up policies concerning public access to networked information in libraries.*

### **Why does IFLA need an updated Internet Manifesto and who will benefit from it?**

- As with the previous versions, we believe that a revised Internet Manifesto will help clarify libraries positions' with an international unified voice including areas such as freedom of speech and expression, importance of equity and access to information, online digital and algorithmic literacy and access to data and knowledge globally. It will provide libraries' vision of the Internet we want and will set out a clear and compelling narrative about the place of libraries in the wider digital space.
- It will reiterate the importance of engaging libraries in Internet Governance conversations and spaces.
- An updated manifesto is an opportunity to address the many important developments that have taken place over the last decade since the publication of IFLA's latest manifesto! – Not just in terms of technology, but also in relation to the way in which the Internet interacts with human rights issues and contemporary social and political movements.
- It will urge the wider public to reflect on possible solutions for issues surrounding internet safety, inclusiveness, privacy and cybersecurity from the library context; as these are key elements to prevent the abusive use of technology.
- It should ideally serve as an advocacy reference point for libraries and people in the information services field when looking to shape and influence national digital policies or strategies.
- It may be used by people in the library field and civil society to foster collaboration and partnership with other organizations and institutions that share similar values and objectives regarding the use and access to the Internet.

### **Why now?**

The growing digital divide that separates those with and without access to the internet greatly increases the importance of libraries as a trusted gateway for access in ways that can enhance civil society. Far from being superseded by non-library information services, the manifesto is an opportunity to highlight the vital ways in which libraries contribute to digital inclusion by making public access infrastructure available to everyone, providing digital content, services and accessibility, addressing digital



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literacy via capacity building and providing services and programs related to civic engagement, education, health, wellness and employment.

A revised manifesto from IFLA is also timely in the context of the [Global Digital Compact](#), [The World Summit on the Information Society, IGF +20 review](#), and other parallel processes in ensuring that the library voice remains relevant and strong in international discussions that are shaping the way forward in Internet Governance. It will also distil our position on Internet key points - the general principle of freedom of access and the limited qualifiers to the general principle, recognising that the Internet represents a heterogeneous set of networked protocols including web, email, data discovery and interchange standards including both broadcast (web) and peer-to-peer (email and other) applications.

We are also aware that with the existing digital gap, there is an increasing risk of leaving some voices behind throughout these processes and we consider it crucial to minimize that risk. To this end, IFLA's global network represents an opportunity to connect not only with those voices in the library community, but also with marginalized populations that use libraries as their only point of access to reliable information via the Internet.

### **What happens once it is published?**

In view of the rapid pace at which technology is advancing, we understand that continuity is needed in order to ensure real change. For this reason we consider that this should not be a one-time process but rather a frequent exercise of revision to ensure that library and information professionals stay responsive to new challenges and opportunities. An annual review process that allows for external input may be considered as a viable long-term solution for this.

### **How can I engage?**

We want to hear from you ! – we are currently working under the following Internet-related themes: universal access, rights and freedoms, digital literacy, data governance, internet fragmentation and artificial intelligence.

Please feel free to provide your input either via this interactive board: [Internet Manifesto consultation](#), or via email to [maria.debrasdefer@ifla.org](mailto:maria.debrasdefer@ifla.org). Keep in mind that even if you do not have any input to provide at this stage, any ideas or suggestions on joint engagement via the dissemination phase of the final product in 2024 are also welcome.