This is the published version:

Cawley, Justine and Horn, Anne 2005, Information society : The University of Queensland Cybrary is thinking globally and acting locally, in Information society or knowledge societies? Unesco in the smart state, Southbound, Penang, Malaysia, pp.111-130.

Available from Deakin Research Online:

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The information society: The University of Queensland Cybrary is thinking globally and acting locally

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Libraries, big and small are found in most communities throughout the world. They provide community access points in which knowledgeable staff assist and train users.¹

Introduction

The library profession has long championed the importance of free access to information and thrived in its role as educators and enablers to the community, linking people with information and helping them obtain the skills necessary to identify, access and use this information effectively. Access to information and knowledge and capacity building are key tenets in the Plan of Action that arose from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003. Libraries, including university libraries, are critical to the success of this plan. Many university libraries recognize in their goals and aspirations the role they play in providing multi-purpose community centres and public access points (2003: 5). The University of Queensland (UQ) Cybrary’s commitment to community partnerships is clearly stated in its Profile & operational plan,² with regional, national and international strategies a priority for the organization.

Globally, university libraries are creating open access e-print repositories to increase accessibility for all to an institution’s research output. There has certainly been much debate since the WSIS meeting in Geneva concerning the veracity of claims that access to scientific information is far more restrictive in the e-publishing environment.

Information literacy, which incorporates the information and communication technology (ICT) literacy referred to in the Plan of Action,
has been identified as an essential ingredient for creating an inclusive information society and helping to bridge the digital divide. For "(e)veryone to have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society ... capacity building and ICT literacy are essential" (WSIS, 2003: 5). Training of students, educationalists, professional groups and the wider community in the use of ICT extends beyond the public library. E-literacy skills are included in the competencies students have attained when they graduate from university. How university libraries might promote e-literacy among other groups will be discussed further in this chapter.

This chapter will also investigate information literacy within the context of the WSIS vision of the information society, including some of the impediments threatening free access to information by all in the community. These impediments include areas such as online security, legal complexities and the current environment of publishing and access to scholarly information. We outline some steps taken by the Cybrary to meet the considerable challenges. Institutional, regional, national and international actions are required for the goals and strategies to be achieved. Libraries have an essential role to play in developing the information society envisaged by the partners and stakeholders of WSIS, and collaboration has been underway on a broad scale for some time. In fact, "librarianship is the only profession which is really alert to an information literacy citizenry as the prerequisite for personal and democratic empowerment, lifelong learning and societal and economic development" (Bundy, 2002: 1).

**Capacity building and ICT literacy**

**Information infrastructure and access**
The gradual creation of information-haves and information have-nots has resulted in the information society (Cawkell, 2002: 433), where those with access to information and technology, and the knowledge on how to use them are distinctly advantaged socially and economically over those who are less fortunate in these areas. The "digital divide", as this aspect of the information society is often called, is one of the critical issues addressed by the work libraries do in connecting the community with information, and has been identified in both the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted at WSIS. In the declaration, it is stated,
Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation to all social organization. It is central to the Information Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits that the Information Society offers (WSIS, 2003: 1).

This philosophy underpins library commitment to free flow of information; the provision of community access to information and resources, and expert help in using enabling technologies; and the continual promotion and development of information literacy within the community.

Australia is better placed than many countries when looking at ICT indicators as a measure of a knowledge-based economy and society. Australia is ranked thirteenth of the top 20 countries with the highest number of Internet users. There are over 13.5 million Internet users in a country with a population of 20.226 million (estimate for 2004). The Internet penetration is therefore 67.1%, second only to the United States.

According to the World Development Indicators database, Australia (565 computers per 1,000 people), falls marginally behind the United States and Sweden, when measuring access to personal computers (The World Bank, 2004). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) latest ICT indicators are for 2002. The proportion of households with computers at this time was 61% and households with a mobile phone 71% (ABS, 2002a: paragraph 3). By the September 2004 update, growth in these figures is expected. For example, the more up-to-date ABS data on Internet activity in Australia highlights an increase in broadband subscribers of 27% from the end of the September quarter 2003 to the end of the March quarter 2004. Interestingly, dial-up subscriber numbers fell over the same period (ABS, 2004: paragraph 7).

There remain many challenges and questions yet to be answered, on the best means of connectivity necessary to reach all in the community. For instance, is high-speed connectivity to all parts of this vast Australian continent best achieved through cable, wireless, satellite or a mix of these? National e-strategies aimed at improving systemic infrastructure in universities and strategies testing the foundation infrastructure required for advanced networks are happening. These strategies support a high quality research sector delivering internationally-recognized research outcomes. "... research excellence will be crucial to Australia's future
social, economic, geopolitical and environmental wellbeing” (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2004: 3).

State-based strategies are reaching distant communities. In Queensland, indigenous libraries have been established in communities that stretch to the very north of the State. Individual institutions, including the UQ Cybrary, have developed regional strategies to assist. UQI Cyberschool is an example that is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

There has been much discussion in Australia over the last few years concerning the knowledge-based economy, more so than the knowledge-based society. In February 2000 there was the National Innovation Summit followed by the Government Chief Scientist’s report, *The Chance to change*, in August 2000. Then early in 2002, *Backing Australia’s Ability*, outlined the government’s strategy to further enhance Australia’s international competitiveness. There emerges a common thread. That is, "ICTs, particularly the Internet, are creating a knowledge-based society
by breaking down the barriers to knowledge and participation” (ABS, 2002: 1). And yet, infrastructure without information and the skills to access, use and communicate that information will not deliver the targets embodied in the WSIS Plan of Action.

**Information literacy and the digital divide**

Information literacy, as an important aspect of achieving a fair and equitable information society and bridging the digital divide, has been food for thought and debate in the library profession for some time. Bruce and Candy (2000) are two of the key researchers in this area. They offer in their book, *Information Literacy around the World*, two definitions of this phenomenon: “a complex of skills and competencies that enable people to access and use information” or “a complex of ways of working with information” (Candy, 2000: 4). They also state, “how people use information in pursuit of their personal and professional lives is the key to their empowerment, their development, and even their happiness” (Candy, 2000: 3).

Advocacy and education in information literacy, above tutelage in the use of ICT, is the key issue of the information age (Bundy, 2002: 6) and is crucial to the philosophy of WSIS. This idea is firmly acknowledged in the Declaration of Principles, which discusses the requirements of a people-centred information society, not technology centred (Bundy, 2002: 1). The declaration states, “we are aware that ICTs should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves” (Bundy, 2002: 2). The Prague Declaration⁶ presented in 2003, and supported by the US National Commission on Library and Information Science and UNESCO, proposed a set of basic information literacy principles vital to ensuring the citizens of an information society have the skills and knowledge to utilize fully the new information tools available. The declaration states that information literacy “is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the information society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning” (The Prague Declaration, 2003: paragraph 3). These notions are supported by Servaes (2004), “giving access to technologies is worthless unless a matching effort is undertaken in education so as to level up the users’ skills and ability to make efficient and responsible use of these technologies” (Servaes, 2004: 1). Similarly, Bundy (2001) emphasizes, “information is not knowledge”, and that “the thrill of acquiring or distributing information quickly must not be confused with the more demanding task of converting it into knowledge and wisdom. Regardless
of how advanced computers become, they should not substitute for human basic cognitive skills of awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgement” (Bundy, 2001: 4). ICT is certainly an important requirement for the information society, but mean little unless the members of the information society know how to use them effectively. In fact, the specific skills and competencies that characterize information literacy, defined by the Council of Australian University Libraries (CAUL) in 2001, and quoted by Lloyd (2003), that is “the ability to define, locate, access, evaluate and use information in an ethical and socially responsibly manner as part of a lifelong learning strategy,” (Lloyd, 2003: 87) are “essential global thriving activities in a twenty-first century where information will be the pervasive commodity” (Bundy, 2002: 2).

One example of the Cybrary acting as a leader in enabling information access combined with an embedded educational programme is UQL Cyberschool. It was developed in 1998 as an outreach programme to enable secondary schools to acquire information resources at an affordable rate (Schmidt, 2003: 14). The programme provides enhanced information access to quality information through negotiated discount purchase of commercially available full-text databases and access to a gateway service via the UQL Cyberschool website, plus training and advice from expert staff. This means many schools can subscribe to resources they otherwise would not be able to afford, which, in turn, makes a significant impact on the learning experiences of the students. In 2004, 153 secondary schools subscribed to UQL Cyberschool, and more than 100,000 students used the website to access the wide variety of online information resources, including up to 28 databases. The resources offered through the UQL Cyberschool website include online, full-text journals and “dramatically expands the amount and availability of quality information resources available to students” (Blumson, Fleming & Turnbull, 2002: 24). In addition to organizing affordable subscriptions to commercial products, UQL Cyberschool staff created a database of freely available Internet resources relevant to each of the eight national curriculum key learning areas. All included Internet sites have been evaluated by UQL Cyberschool staff and are suitable for secondary school students conducting research. Statistics on the use of the UQL Cyberschool website are impressive, with over 38,490 requests for the home page, and over 231,503 requests for pages from the entire site. The Cybrary also conducts training and tours for students involved in the UQL Cyberschool programme. Schools bring classes of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students to the Cybrary to conduct
research for specific school assignments, and UQL Cyberschool Coordinators provide tours and training for the students to improve their information literacy skills, to enable them to locate and use resources in the Cybrary, and to experience university life and research.

UQL Cyberschool aims to embed the process of information literacy into secondary education, which puts them in a strong position for learning in university and in life, as they are more able to cope with the demands and challenges of the Information Society. UQL Cyberschool is “reaching out into the community, making electronic information affordable, accessible and relevant into the 21st century” (Blumson, Fleming & Turnbull, 2002: 27).

Open access repositories: One strategy proving its worth

Much has been written about the nature of scholarly publishing. Researchers continue to offer their research output to the publishers of peer-reviewed journals, a process they are dependent on for promotion and tenure. Publishers then charge ever-increasing subscription prices to be paid by the same institution that has already funded the research once. “The cost of obtaining information has also increased. The average price per serial title in Australia increased by 60 per cent (between 1996 and 1998), with science and technology titles experiencing higher increases than other disciplines” (Batterham, 2000: 41). For most university libraries, serial costs account for 70% to 80% of the budget available to purchase resources.

Cost is one issue. Access to research or more specifically research outcomes under the new e-publishing models is more restrictive. Where the community was once able to browse the shelves, now they are generally required to authenticate and be associated with an educational institution before they can gain access to scholarly journals. The result is research is not as widely disseminated as it could be. Consequently, the impact of the research is lessened, “if people cannot see results, they cannot build on them. Wheels may be unnecessarily reinvented” (Weaver, 2002: 4). Libraries have been collaborating for at least 10 years now to combat prohibitive clauses in publisher licence agreements and to secure fairer prices.

The collision of the commercialization of research with the notion that freely shared information helps create new knowledge (Romero, 2003:
32) has created a revolution in the publication and dissemination of scholarly research, with many libraries, researchers, research institutions and other interested stakeholders supporting the development of open access initiatives as an alternative to the commercial publishing model of information collection and dissemination. The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee has recommended that all higher education institutions in the United Kingdom develop institutional repositories where research output can be stored and freely accessed by all (2004: 3). Their aim is to lead by example and act as an agent for change at an international level. The Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, written by participants at the Conference on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities in 2003, aims to promote the Internet for global access to scholarly knowledge through open access schemes. It states, “our mission of disseminating knowledge is only half complete if the information is not made widely and readily available to society” (Max Planck Society, 2003: 1) and presents its vision of open access as a gateway to knowledge and cultural heritage. The declaration states that there are two conditions that must be met for open access. An author contributing to an open access scheme must give permission for free access to the material with the conditions of proper attribution and responsible use from those who use the work for their own research purposes, and a complete version of the work must be deposited into an online repository using suitable technical standards. The repository must be supported and maintained by a government body, academic or scholarly institution, or other organization that supports the principles of open access.

Libraries throughout the world, and especially academic libraries, have an important role to play in the development of open access as an alternative to traditional publishing. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) emphasizes this in its Statement on Open Access to Scholarly Literature and Research Documentations, stating support for “collaborative initiatives to develop sustainable open access publishing models” (2003: 2). As the traditional keepers of research output in the form of print journals and books, libraries are the logical choice as the keepers of electronically published information and this has been occurring for some time with library journal holdings increasingly being made available online via virtual libraries and cybraries. The move to open access sits well with the libraries’ responsibility to provide access to information to those who seek it. As Johnson states,
“the essence of the case for open access is the notion that public good – the societal benefit derived of our research investment – is better served when barriers to sharing of research have been removed. That belief aligns well with library values” (Johnson, 2004: 21).

One such example of an open access initiative is The University of Queensland’s e-prints repository, ePrints@UQ, which has been developed and managed since May 2002 by the Cybrary, is part of a Group of Eight (Go8) initiative aiming to ensure free and equitable access to the research output of major Australian universities. The archive is a deposit collection of papers that showcases the research of academic staff and postgraduate students, both past and present, of the University across a range of subjects and disciplines. Papers include articles, book chapters, conference papers and data sets. By the end of 2003, around 600 documents were housed in the archive, and by June 2004, the figure was closer to 1,000. The ePrints@UQ archive is also compliant with the Open Archives Initiative which develops and promotes interoperability standards to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content. These standards allow archived material to be harvested, for example, by Internet search engines such as Google and Yahoo, or by cross-archive search tools like OAIster. This greatly increases the visibility of research and allows free access to the wider community of scholars, on a national and international level.

**e-Publishing: Challenging the commercial giants**

The long-anticipated ‘first phase’ meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in December, was supposed to have been about equal access. It turned out being equally about open access as leading scientific organizations pushed their open-access initiative onto the World Summit agenda. (Ashling, 2004: 1)

While the open access movement has been gaining momentum, the publishing industry concomitantly is characterized by mergers and acquisitions, reducing competition to a few giants. On 16 March 2004 SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) released a press statement praising the Washington, D.C. Principles for Free Access to Science signed by a coalition of 48 not-for-profit scientific, technical and medical publishers. In the same month, Taylor and Francis announced a proposed merger with Informa in order to compete with the industry giants, Elsevier (turnover in 2003: Euro 4,141 million) and Springer-
Kluwer (total consolidated sales for fiscal year 2003: Euro 833 million\textsuperscript{12}). Taylor and Francis (turnover in 2003: [£ '000] 173,679\textsuperscript{13}) had recently acquired Marcel Dekker, Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers, CRC Press and Frank Cass (Weekly News Digest, 2004: paragraph 3). Once Blackwell (sales in 2003: £174 million\textsuperscript{14}) and Wiley (revenue in 2003: ($ '000) 853,9711\textsuperscript{15}) are added to this list, then the handful of publishers controlling the marketplace is complete.

Again in March 2004, the Guardian reported that the biggest publishers had defended their huge profits, in front of MPs, against the rising challenge of new “open access” Internet publishing (Hencke, 2004: 21). The dominant players, including Reed Elsevier, are starting to appear at least a little shaken by the “global groundswell seeking open access” and the threat this poses to future profits (Pheasant, 2004: 29).

The issue of open access is developing into a David and Goliath struggle. On the one hand there are the not-for-profit publishers and scholarly communities and, on the other hand, the multinational, commercial publisher conglomerates. Some of the stones may sting the giants, for example, a recent downgrade of the 2005 profit forecast for Elsevier by the Deutsche Bank (Pheasant, 2004: 29). Nevertheless, the sheer size of the conglomerates means that to achieve affordable access to scientific information will require multi-stakeholder strategies. In 2004, increasing numbers of prestigious universities were cancelling subscriptions for journals, including those acquired through large bundled services, and at the same time encouraging authors to withhold articles from certain publishers. The WSIS target of affordable access to information will not be an easy one to achieve.

**UQ Cybrary as enabler to community learning**

As implied by its name, the UQ Cybrary’s collections span both the physical and virtual realms. Thirteen branch libraries and one website (http://www.cybrary.uq.edu.au/) offer access and service to all who enter. Between them, the branches hold over 2 million volumes, 11,000 print journals and 18,500 audiovisual materials. The online collection includes over 20,000 electronic journals, 600 networked databases, 296,000 electronic books and a comprehensive Virtual Reference Collection of online resources hand-picked by librarians. While 3 million people visit the Cybrary each year, nearly 30 million pages of the Cybrary’s website are used by over 500,000 computers throughout the world. Those who access
the Cybrary externally (from a location off-campus), make use of many services, including using the catalogue, finding out branch information and opening hours, and for those with the appropriate authority, accessing e-journals, e-books and electronic databases. We know from the web statistics we maintain that one of the most popular services accessed is our gateway to national library catalogues worldwide.¹⁶

Remote access to commercial electronic products is restricted to staff and students of the University; however “walk-in access” is a requirement of licence agreements for the electronic products purchased by the Cybrary. “Walk-in access” indicates resources will be available to non-University users of the library, provided they are physically located within a branch library. This is particularly important as many of these products are generally not available to the wider community via other means, such as at public libraries, partly due to cost and largely due to their research nature. Some publishers and producers disappointment on this issue of walk-in access, but the Cybrary continues to be a tough negotiator in this area, believing that the free flow of scholarly information must continue for access to be fair and equitable to the whole community (Horn, 2003: 4).

Commitment to community: Acting locally
The University of Queensland, the UQ Cybrary’s parent organisation, has a commitment to the community, and to the development of a fair and equitable Information Society. The University’s Strategic Plan 2004–2008 deals specifically with community partnerships and states as a strategic objective that the organization wishes to “maintain the University’s role as a provider of specialist services to the community through its libraries, museums, clinics, collections and other specialised scientific, cultural and public performance facilities” (University of Queensland, 2004: 6). In line with this strategy, the Cybrary continues with commitment to community access, recognizing its civic mission and valuing the “long-standing practice and community expectation in Australia that publicly funded libraries or record keeping institutions provide public access” (Horn, 2003: 1). Consequential to this mission is a concern regarding access to information that is being put in place by publishers, legislators, Governments and agencies. These bodies, and their control over information continually threaten community access and the Cybrary has been active in challenging this threat and developing new services that both comply with legislation, and allow fair access to all library users.
Physical access to collections

Physical access to collections held in the UQ Cybrary’s 13 branch libraries is available to the community. The Cybrary offers an inquiry service to all members of the community, assisting them in finding the information they seek. There are no structures impeding entry, which tends to be the experience in the United Kingdom, the United States and parts of South-East Asia, and no fees are charged for access to advice and collections. Telephone assistance is also available for the hours the branches are open; that is, up to 84 hours a week. For those in the community who prefer to use the web, the AskACybrarian service, an online information desk, is available. The AskACybrarian service provides answers to questions within two working days and in 2003 a reference service using chat was introduced.

Branches have open access collections where anyone is able to browse the books and print journals. The only exception to this is the Fryer Library, the special collections section of the Cybrary. Manuscripts, rare books and special collections in various forms – for example, architectural drawings, photographs and book plates – are retrieved for visitors to view. No “reader’s tickets” or letters of introduction are necessary. Members of the local community and the international scholarly community are all welcome. The Ipswich Library and the Gatton Library, located at the University’s regional campuses, have found their place in the local community.

Community access and Internet security:

UQ Cybrary solution

Across its 13 branches, the UQ Cybrary offers library users access to over 1,000 computer workstations through which many of the Cybrary’s online resources can be accessed. Unfortunately, offering Internet and computer access to all walk-in users at the Cybrary and ensuring security and non-abuse of facilities do not go hand in hand. As stated in the WSIS Declaration of Principles, “it is necessary to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights” (2003: 5). Universities must comply with a raft of legislation and guidelines which control how networks are operated and how information is accessed and reproduced. The legislation includes: The Digital Agenda Act\textsuperscript{17} and other copyright law, the AVCC guidelines for universities on authentication and Internet access, The Broadcasting Services Act\textsuperscript{18} and the University’s Internet Code of Practice,\textsuperscript{19} which limits
Internet access to staff and students of the University who are over 18. To protect the University against breaches, the Cybrary has developed an authentication system that both complies with legislative requirements and continues to offer community users of the Cybrary access to the wealth of online scholarly resources that help make up the Cybrary. The Trusted Zone is a list of domains for which no authentication is required for access, meaning that non-University users can freely gain access. These URLs are websites and electronic resources that have been selected by library staff because they directly support the teaching, learning and research activities of the University and as a consequence are intended to offer support to the wider community of library users and researchers. Material is continually being added to this collection. Access to the Internet outside the Trusted Zone requires a University username and password. This means that, via the Cybrary website, community users of the library have access to an ever-increasing wealth of online resources that are of a research quality, in addition to the Cybrary’s physical book and journal collections and online commercial products.

Creating a Cybrary: Continuing education for developing countries

Many international and regional visitors spend time at the UQ Cybrary, gaining new skills and knowledge in the management and operations of academic libraries. Nearly 320 visitors from countries including China, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States visited the library during 2003, some to acquire new skills and others as part of delegations to view the Cybrary’s award-winning facilities. Requests continue from librarians in tertiary institutions to visit the Cybrary to develop new skills and knowledge. An awareness of some of the unmet continuing education needs of information professionals in developing countries led to the creation of a training programme Creating a Cybrary: The Library of the Future.

The Creating a Cybrary programme is offered over a six week period twice each year and is focused on the practicalities of creating an electronic library. The programme begins with a week of introductory overview sessions focused on management, resources, services and technology, presented by the experienced senior staff of the Cybrary. Subsequently, participants may choose from courses in four elective modules, while also gaining practical work experience in a branch library or functional section.
In many cases, the participants of the Creating a Cybrary programme seek out the training themselves after exploring and using the Cybrary website from their home institutions. Courses are customized “so that a match is achieved between what they need to learn and what they actually undertake during the training period or internship” (Jordan, 2003: 50). Participants receive training notes and a CD-ROM containing training session materials to take back to their home libraries, where they can implement the new skills and knowledge they have acquired into practice, for the benefit of their communities.

The Cybrary’s aim with this programme is to assist with skills development to match information technology and telecommunications infrastructure growth in developing countries. By enabling information professionals in developing countries to spend time in a highly developed library, skills can be learnt and practised in a functioning environment before they return home to implement what they have learnt (Jordan, 2003: 49). The Cybrary is involved in collaborating on an international level on such a project because “for operational libraries to participate in this way in the overall education of information professionals is to extend to our own professions’ development of the type of co-operation that has long been a principle of librarianship. It is to remember and enact the fact that we are all partners in educating ourselves and our colleagues” (Jordan, 2003: 49). One of the most important aspects of the programme from the participant’s perspective is to be immersed in the climate and culture of the Cybrary and the academic environment it operates within. The University’s educational framework of a student-focused and resource-based teaching and learning methodology is different to what many of the participants have experienced in their home countries and the experience allows them to see opportunities their parent institutions may be able to exploit in the future (Jordon, 2003: 51).

Towards WSIS Phase 2

This chapter has raised several issues pertinent to creating an information society that is fair and equitable on a global scale. Programmes and collaborative projects initiated by the UQ Cybrary help to achieve an effect have been presented. The UQL Cyberschool programme, ePrints@UQ open access repository, and the Creating a Cybrary programme are strategies at the regional, national and international level that contribute to achieving the aims of the WSIS.
Collaboration makes it possible for every institution to capitalize on the professional traditions and expertise of all (Bishoff, 2004: 34). Collaboration and partnerships by WSIS stakeholders is the key for building the information society and transforming the digital divide into digital opportunities (WSIS, 2003: 13). Governments must develop e-strategies and policy guidelines and libraries should play a vital role, as their networks are already strong and far-reaching, and their position as "community access points" already exists (WSIS, 2003: 2). Before the next phase of WSIS in 2005, a number of issues will need to be addressed such as the legal environment of the information society; how cultural diversity; and economic inequality can be overcome; how the needs of developing countries regarding information technology and telecommunications infrastructure will be met; and how control of networks will be managed. This chapter has only touched these complex issues. "Close national, regional and international cooperation among all stakeholders in the implementation of . . . (the Digital Solidarity) Agenda is vital" (WSIS, 2003: 12).

The UQ Cybrary is involved in various cooperative partnerships through its membership of Go8 (Group of Eight), OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre), IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), IATUL (International Association of Technological University Libraries), CAUL (Council of Australian University Libraries), Universitas 21 Libraries and QULOC (Queensland University Libraries Office of Cooperation). Through these partnerships, the UQ Cybrary can work to create change at a regional level and contribute to national and international efforts to provide equality of access to information. In support of the University's internationalization direction, the Cybrary has been actively involved in providing consultancy services to governments and educational institutions in Malaysia, Vietnam and Oman.

**Conclusion**

The UQ Cybrary is committed to offering access to information and resources for the wider community. This commitment is supportive of the aims and principles of the WSIS and is not without its difficulties in practice. There are many impediments that need to be overcome to ensure equity of access to information for all the community.
IFLA (2003) estimates that there are over 250,000 libraries around the world. This includes many libraries in the least developed countries (4). The ubiquity of libraries and their commitment to information literacy and the provision of information access via open access technology places libraries in a strong position to achieve the equitable information society hoped for by the stakeholders of WSIS.

Notes

9. The Group of Eight (Go8) Universities comprises The University of Queensland, The University of Adelaide, The Australian National University, The University of Melbourne, Monash University, The University of New South Wales, The University of Sydney and The University of Western Australia.
References


