IATUL as a mirror of library developments since 1966 as documented in IATUL Proceedings

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IATUL
Under boom conditions when there are no obstacles to progress, history is often forgotten. When resources become scarce, historical examples begin to be of interest. To look back today is appropriate not only because of the recession we have suffered, but, first of all, to mark the jubilee of IATUL. My first-hand knowledge of technological university library management started in the late sixties. Therefore I have not ventured to look further back in this very subjective skimming of IATUL records.

*IATUL Proceedings* which has evolved through different forms, including five years as a journal, *IATUL Quarterly* from 1987 to 1991, is a treasury for retrospective studies. There are sources for comprehensive studies of the development of library management and technology as well as for biographical research. Having an engineering background I shall concentrate on some technological milestones.

During the last quarter of a century libraries have made revolutionary progress, and technological university libraries have been pioneers in applying the most advanced information technology. The secret of this success is to a great extent a virtue of necessity, as there has been a chronic shortage of library staff in Western countries.

The progressive environment of a university of technology has promoted library automation, and an exacting clientele has demanded user-friendly information retrieval. Already in 1966 IATUL seminars were embarked upon, to begin with as an annual event, and many seminar papers dealt with "mechanization and automation" of libraries and their information services. Van der Wolk's automated stack management system at Delft University of Technology was admired by colleagues from many countries.
I was busy equipping the new library building of Helsinki University of Technology and was disappointed when hearing that the Dutch system, or a corresponding one, had not even been considered.

The first computerized information service was SDI-Selective Dissemination of Information². Formulating SDI profiles together with clients gave a good occasion for user education, which also covered information retrieval in the off-line mode.

The annual bibliography of publications by IATUL members, printed in *IATUL Proceedings* regularly included reports on interactive online searching from the year 1974 on³. The first all-online issue appeared in 1980⁴ and was followed by two issues on User Education in the Online Age published in the year 1982⁵ and in 1985⁶. There was also a seminar on user training in 1986.

Bibliometry was a timely problem area in 1988 and pointed the way to strategic library planning⁷. The seminar in Turku⁸ was devoted to management issues and included a workshop, conducted by Professor Maurice Line, on The Changing Role of the Library Director as a Manager of Resources. In her editorial of *IATUL Quarterly* Joan. E. Hardy especially recommended the paper by E.D. Gerryts on organizational development in the modern university environment as a suitable check-list for strategic planning.

When the 14th Biennial Conference, held in 1989 at MIT, focused on the impact of new and emerging technologies, OPACs, CD-ROMs and networks were already routine features in member libraries⁹. Today information highways and the brave new information society are debated in a populistic way by media. They often give the wrong impression that e.g. internet suddenly has been created from nothing. Scientists and technological university libraries remember ARPA-net of the US Department of Defence from the beginning of the seventies, as the first international network of networks, which little by little has grown to its present size.
New developments reported on at the MIT meeting and its proceedings included the use of ISDN in remote online searching, expert systems and AI in library administration and information service, multimedia development and videodisc storage and retrieval of visual information, such as slides.

Interlending and document delivery have been priority topics during all these years and new technologies and cooperative programmes have emerged. Among the later developments the PICA RAPDOC project, under the coordination of the IATUL President Gerard van Marle\textsuperscript{10}, is an excellent example, reported on at the IATUL Seminar held in Estonia in 1992. This was the first time IATUL convened a meeting in a Baltic country, and close cooperation with libraries in these newly liberated states got off to a flying start. Seminar participants from Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom donated to the host libraries, Tallinn Technical University Library and the National Library of Estonia, library catalogs, union catalogs, national bibliographies and other databases on CD-ROM to provide tools for interlending and document supply.

The 15th Biennial Conference in Hamburg-Harburg\textsuperscript{11} again had a strong emphasis on information technology of the nineties. National library networks were also described, as well as newer and planned library buildings.

The proceedings of the IATUL Seminar in Sheffield in 1994 will be printed in 1995. Its contents are future oriented regarding both academic publishing and library management. The whole seminar, with its study tour to the British Library Document Supply Centre, looked into the future, while the social programme was framed by old country estates and historical sights. A report from this 16th Biennial Conference and 40th Anniversary is envisaged for publication in 1996.

To sum up:
In spite of economic ups and downs the period covered witnessed a zealous, user-oriented development of library services, in a pioneering spirit. IATUL libraries have,
to a larger extent than those in classical universities, offered extensive information services and information retrieval facilities for their users within the university and outside to supplement reference services. User training for the online age started early as well as the production and marketing of CD-ROMs.

*IATUL Proceedings* has been very well covered by abstract and index services in the field of information provision, such as *LISA, Library and information science abstracts*. They also show that IATUL libraries have become important information and document supply centers.

### Development highlights

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<td>&quot;Mechanization and automation&quot;</td>
<td>1966-</td>
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<td>SDI</td>
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<td>ISDN</td>
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<td>Expert systems and artificial intelligence</td>
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<td>CD-ROM production</td>
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### References


2. Schmidt, Jette. Observations on and comparison of Loughborough University of


