

National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

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Highlights of the Year

Jeanne Hurley Simon continued as chairperson of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in 1999 with Martha B. Gould as vice-chair. Sadly, on February 20, 2000, prior to this publication going to press, Mrs. Simon succumbed to cancer. President Clinton designated Mrs. Gould chair on March 3, 2000. Jack E. Hightower, of Austin, Texas was named to the commission with a term ending in 2003. Hightower formerly served on the Texas Supreme Court, and is a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives. President Clinton nominated Bobby L. Roberts and Joan R. Challinor to second five-year terms. Dr. Roberts is the Director of the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock, an accomplished author in the field of U.S. history, librarianship and archival management. Dr. Challinor is chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, and a director of Knight Ridder.

Continuing commissioners, in addition to Challinor and Roberts, are Abe Abramson, Walter Anderson, LeVar Burton, Mary Furlong, José-Marie Griffiths, Frank Lucchino, and Joel Valdez. The extension terms for Commissions Lucchino, Roberts and Valdez expired on July 19, 1998, and they continued in office until July 19, 1999. Winston Tabb continues to represent James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, a permanent NCLIS member. Diane Frankel as Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services served part of the year, before her resignation to go to the James Irvine Foundation and was succeeded by Beverly Sheppard, Acting Director.

Robert S. Willard, a former commissioner, is the executive director, and Judith Russell whose library career included a time as director of the Federal Depository Library Program is the deputy director. Denise Davis joined the staff in June as director of statistics and surveys. She came to the staff with more than 15 years experience as an academic and public librarian.

The theme for the commission's 1999 programs remained the importance of library and information services in an electronic networked environment. The NCLIS action plan, *Addressing the Library and Information Service Needs of the Nation*, continued to serve as a tool to focus the commission's energies and establish its priorities through the year 2000. During 1999, efforts began to develop a new more comprehensive strategic plan.

NCLIS completed the Assessment of Standards for the Creation, Dissemination, and Permanent Accessibility of Electronic Government Information Products at the request of the Government Printing Office. The report, *Assessment of Electronic Government Information Products* was issued on March 30, 1999. The Superintendent of Documents will use the results of this work effort to continue to plan and implement the transition to a more electronic Federal Depository Library Program. The Commission also plans to continue its examination of information policy as it relates to creation, dissemination and permanent accessibility of electronic government information.

As part of its responsibility for advising the director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on policies and financial assistance for library services, and for ensuring that IMLS policies and activities are coordinated with other activities of the federal government, NCLIS and the National Museum Services Board held their third meeting in November 1999. NCLIS established a committee to assist IMLS with development of the National Award for Library Service. This new award will complement an award currently made in the museum community. The award will recognize extraordinary achievement in serving the public and will be presented during National Library Week in April 2000. The Commission continues its participation in the cycles of draft, guidelines, plans, feedback, reports, evaluation and revision for the federal grants program for libraries and information services administered by IMLS.

Support for Executive and Legislative Branches

Data collection for the *Assessment of Electronic Government Information Products* was undertaken for the Government Printing Office. Data collection began in 1998 and the results of the study were published in March 1999.

The Commission also provided information related to a variety of proposals for federally mandated use of filtering software for schools and libraries that offer children access to the Internet and receive federal funds. After a holding a hearing on the Perils and Promise of the Internet in late 1998, the Commission published and distributed a brochure entitled *Kids and The Internet: The Promise and the Perils* with practical guidelines for librarians and library trustees.

Following the announcement by the Department of Commerce of its intention to close the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) and transfer some of its function to other agencies, the Commission began discussions with various stakeholders. The discussion will continue well into the next year.

NCLIS continues to work closely and meet with officials in a variety of federal agencies to obtain information and provide timely input on national and international policies affecting library and information services. During 1999, Commissioners and staff met with officials from the Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce and State as well as the Federal Communications Commission, Government Printing Office, Library of Congress, National Agricultural Library, National Institute for Literacy, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget, Small

Agency Council, and White House Millennium Council, among others. NCLIS also met with individuals from the Association for Federal Information Resources Management, Federal Depository Library Council, Federal Publishers Committee, Federal Library and Information Center Committee, the Interagency Council for Printing and Publication Services, among others.

National Information Activities

The unprecedented study on the *Assessment of Government Information Products* found that there is an overall lack of government information policy guiding electronic publishing, dissemination, permanent public access, and information cycle management. There is a lack especially in information policy as it relates to agency missions. Also, there is a lack of overall coordination of these initiatives at the governmental, branch, and even agency level. The survey found that some government agencies have already, or are moving to, establish guidelines or best practices for presenting and organizing government information products on the web, although full compliance with guidelines is a goal that has not yet been achieved. NCLIS is planning a third phase of the study to identify concrete actions the government could and should pursue, taking into account the results of the Assessment along with an earlier review undertaken by the Computer Sciences and Technology Board of the National Academy of Sciences in 1997.

Because the Commission recognized that recent advances in information technology have improved conditions for some people with disabilities while presenting new challenges to others, the Commission conducted a hearing on *Library and Information Services for Individuals with Disabilities* at the Kellogg Conference Center of Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, on July 8, 1999. This hearing served as the first step in the examination of a very complex matter. The information gained from this hearing, in addition to continuing research and study, will ultimately guide future action in determining the need for policy recommendations to appropriate government agencies and other organizations.

Library and Information Services in a Networked Environment

The Commission published a special report titled *Moving Toward More Effective Public Internet Access: The 1998 National Survey of Public Library Outlet Internet Connectivity*, based on research conducted by John Carlo Bertot and Charles R. McClure. The report follows up on *The 1997 National Survey of U.S. Public Libraries and the Internet* (Bertot, McClure, and Fletcher) co-sponsored by NCLIS with the American Library Association. NCLIS is planning for the sixth study of public libraries and the Internet to be conducted in 2000.

NCLIS/NCES Library Statistics Program

Fiscal Year 1999 marked the 12th consecutive year of cooperation between the Commission and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The Commission serves as a liaison to the library community, organizes meetings and professional development workshops, supports in-state training and technical assistance, monitors trends, and advises NCES on policy matters.

NCLIS is committed to providing access to the work of all steering committees and task groups associated with the Library Statistics Program (LSP). NCES and NCLIS continue planning for an expanded library statistics cooperative. The goal is to facilitate work on crosscutting issues without interfering with the ability of existing constituent groups to continue their work on individual surveys. NCLIS/NCES collaborative activities during 1999 include: enhanced website for six library surveys; web-based tool for comparison of definitions access surveys; peer search tools for online use of data; and a Digest of Library Statistics.

Public library data are collected annually and electronically via the Federal-State Cooperative System administered by NCES in cooperation with NCLIS. During 1999, 33 annual awards were presented. The 1998 Keppel Award was given to 32 states and one territory, acknowledging their submission of prompt, complete and high-quality public library data to the survey. A new award to honor John G. Lorenz, the former NCLIS Library Statistics Coordinator was created in FY1999.

The School Library Media Center Survey (SLMCS) is conducted every five years. NCLIS has conducted two meetings of stakeholders in this community to inform NCES of the need to improve timeliness of the survey and consider opportunities for including SLMC questions in other school assessments conducted by NCES. The Survey remains unchanged for its current collection cycle.

International Activities

NCLIS and Sister Cities International have embarked on a major initiative, *Sister Libraries: a White House Millennium Council Project*. The President and First Lady established the White House Millennium Council to use the widespread interest in the millennium as a force for positive change and to celebrate the accomplishments of this American century. Sister Libraries is the official White House Millennium Council Project of the Commission. The initial goal was for public and school libraries in the United States to pair with others worldwide, focusing on programs specifically planned for children and teenagers. In the fall of 1999 the project expanded to include other types of libraries and a wider variety of programs. During 1999, 100 libraries were selected as participants.

The Commission completed its 14th year of cooperation with the Department of State to coordinate and monitor proposals for International Contributions for Scientific, Educational and Cultural Activities (ICSECA) funds and to disburse the funds.

During its meeting on April 7, 1999, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Commission passed a resolution adopting *Principles for Public Library Service* based on the *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*. The *Principles* put forth 12 key missions considered to be the core of public library services and they specifically address issues of funding, legislation and networks, as well as operation and management issues. Vice Chair Martha Gould, Reno, Nevada, observed, "We believe that by adopting and implementing these *Principles for*

Public Library Service, our libraries will set new and higher standards of service and continue to serve as models for lifelong learning throughout the world."

The Commission continues to be an active participant in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Commissioner Challinor and Executive Director Willard represented NCLIS at the August 1999 General Conference in Bangkok. The Commission also will be an "International Distinguished Partner" with a special role in the preparations for the IFLA conference to be held in Boston in 2001. Preliminary plans include a joint meeting with British library counterparts in conjunction with the IFLA conference.

Publications

Annual Report 1997-1998

Moving Toward More Effective Public Internet Access: The 1998 National Survey of Public Library Outlet Internet Connectivity, March 1999

Assessment of Electronic Government Information Products, March 30, 1999, prepared under contract by Westat for NCLIS and commissioned by the U.S. Government Printing Office

Kids and The Internet: The Promise and The Perils, April 1999

Library Statistics Cooperative Program, 1999

Project Summaries from Designated Sister Libraries, September 1999

United States Participants in Sister Libraries: A white House Millennium Council Project, September 1999

Copies of NCLIS print publications are available free in limited quantities from the NCLIS office until supplies are exhausted. Electronic versions are available on the Commission's website. In addition, selected reports, hearing testimony, comments on various matters before Congress and the Clinton administration, news releases, and other items are also on the website. Web: www.nclis.gov