

The EBLIDA Newsletter is published monthly on European library & information society issues, programmes, news and events of interest to the library, archive and cultural heritage community.

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No. 1. January 2022



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1. Editorial



A new year is starting and we are still in the midst of the Covid storm with prospects that are hard to decrypt in the short term.

In such an uncertain environment, the VUCA (Volatility-Uncertainty-Complexity-Ambiguity) methodology, initially practiced in a military context, may be useful to assess the operational and institutional resilience of EBLIDA.

innovative of all commercial sectors. As a consequence, it is also the most volatile. The dynamics of its change is so dramatically impetuous that products and services are continuously re-modeled. The survival of the companies in this sector is dependent on their ability to transform themselves and adapt to new needs and technological developments. As a result, there is a high level of uncertainty in understanding the future developments of libraries not only because their prospects are unpredictable, but also and especially because there is no clarity in what their role should be. Understanding this complexity is determinant to solve ambiguities linked to the library's public nature – at the same time, an asset and also a constraint put to the course of their evolution.

Resilience in libraries should be found in the elements that, on the one hand, are supporting their consolidation and, on the other hand, in the revision of their practices and governance. Libraries have in the last decades been successful in this process of continuously adapting to the changing needs in their communities. Joanna Rivano Eckerdahl even created a verb for this: 'librarizing'. To support libraries, in the last three years EBLIDA has been active in the following areas: the UN 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, library legislation and policy, and copyright applied to e-lending transactions. The VUCA methodology can help understand the rationale behind this strategy.

The 2030 Agenda on sustainable development provides a new, secure and lasting roof for library activities. With their 17 goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators (but no more than 100 in the European context), Sustainable Development Goals may be an intricate business; they are nevertheless the overall framework into which libraries can easily fit. EBLIDA has created the European SDG House to consolidate this roof as a stronghold against volatility and as an instrument reducing uncertainty.

Appropriate library legislations and policies are a way to map complexity and to provide clear rules to all categories of libraries and library systems: national, public, research or school libraries. In order to chart libraries' journey, EBLIDA is suggesting the revision of the 2000 Council of Europe / EBLIDA Guidelines on library legislation and policies. In the copyright field, the European Directives on copyright and on orphan works set up a comprehensive scenario for library operations, but does not solve ambiguities, in particular in e-book transactions. It is the reason why EBLIDA chose e-lending as a field where opacities lying in European Directives may find transparent solutions.

In the VUCA vocabulary, I would say that EBLIDA is endowing European libraries with instruments which help them contrast volatility, reduce uncertainty, map complexity and clear up ambiguities. With its new 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, to be approved in the EBLIDA Council in June, EBLIDA will convincingly embark upon this itinerary.

I wish you an excellent 2022 in all your endeavours. May you work in a much better, more rejoicing and much healthier environment!

2. The 2022 EBLIDA Annual Council and Conference takes place in Athens on 14-16 June!



Libraries are striving towards opening their doors to debate and inclusive dialogue in order to be meeting places for citizens. This is also a time when knowledge accessed in libraries is challenging traditional library practices and governance. In 2022, EBLIDA will celebrate its 30th birthday.

There is no better way to celebrate an anniversary than delivering value for EBLIDA members thanking them for their loyalty and trust. Together with delivery, we would also like to show that, in devising their strategic plans, library organisations active at European level may follow a methodology based on cooperation and a savvy repartition of their tasks.

Many things will be unique about the 30th EBLIDA Annual Council and Conference. The city of Athens as a location may not be uncommon but is always special. There is no better agora than Athens when you wish to come back to the democratic foundation of European civilization.

For the days in Athens, EBLIDA is planning a special programme with a mix of internal and external activities. EBLIDA activities will develop over three days instead of two days in previous years. . The programme will conform to the new EBLIDA 2022-2025 strategic plan; well-known speakers will show how EBLIDA's strategy corresponds to the needs of European libraries.

EBLIDA's delivery will also be special. Our organisation is offering to the Annual Council and, through the Conference, to libraries all over Europe:

- The new EBLIDA 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, to be approved by the EBLIDA Council;
- A draft of the Council of Europe/ EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe, to be commented by the EBLIDA Council;
- Specific products generated from the EBLIDA 2nd European Report on Sustainable Development and Libraries as well as a reflection concerning the elaboration of the 3rd report;
- A draft review of e-lending practices in some European countries.

The days in Athens, however, will not be limited to the Conference. There are quite a few library organisations working at European level, all of them having excellent programmes, schemes and objectives. This is a mark of prosperity: each of these organisations is indeed striving to get the best for their associates; some of them are participating in EU-funded library projects and this amplifies the library impact on the society. Nevertheless, organisations active in Europe are operating in an uncoordinated way; their results are only shared among their respective constituencies and this is a sign of weakness.

display the multiple facets of the European library vitality.

The full programme of the days in Athens will be soon announced on social media. Please follow EBLIDA [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

3. The 2nd European Report on Sustainable development and libraries (full version)



The [December 2021 issue](#) of the EBLIDA Newsletter included a detailed presentation of the Synthesis of the 2nd European Report on sustainable development and libraries, which was released the same month.

This Synthesis provides many hints on how SDGs are perceived in libraries, but also on how libraries can be perceived in society.

We are pleased to inform the EBLIDA community that the full version of the 2nd Report will be published during the month of the February (and the February issue of the EBLIDA Newsletter will be fully dedicated to the Report).

Without anticipating too much of it, it is enough to say that there are **17 country profiles, each of them structured in three sections:**

a general background together with SDG library priorities and policies, a selection of the best SDG-oriented projects and some hints about funding sources and evaluation.

Of the three sections, the first concerns the institutions which act as national coordinators. Normally, these library agencies are informal and based on personal contacts. Nevertheless, they publish studies, provide guidelines, organise meetings and events; therefore, they are essential for creating awareness and providing impetus to the implementation of SDGs in libraries.

A second, longer section includes a sample of most representative projects related to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The level of commitment is not the same in all countries; nevertheless, it is fair to say that the almost fifty stories that are presented in the report show a variety of objectives and situations which prove the local nature of the projects and their adherence to the spirit and the scope of SDGs.

Finally, the third section provides some hints on how SDG-oriented projects are funded and evaluated. Funding sources are normally national but European support is quite substantial in several countries. Evaluation is normally done according to national parameters, but attempts to evaluate projects following international parameters may also be registered.

4. Library legislation and policy in Europe



Libraries are community hubs striving towards a sustainable, democratic and equitable society.

They are an essential and irreplaceable component of the social and cultural and informational

infrastructure of a sustainable society where freedom of expression, public access to information and democratic participation are guaranteed. Furthermore, they are primary agents in orienting people's minds and mindsets towards a cohesive and inclusive society.

In 2000, the Council of Europe in collaboration with EBLIDA (the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations), drafted the [Council of Europe / EBLIDA Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe](#). These Guidelines have been highly influential in shaping policies and inspiring library-related legislation throughout the Council of Europe Member States. They are still a base of reference for individual libraries working in sometimes challenging local situations, as well as for regional and municipal administrators willing to restructure local library systems towards more advanced agendas.

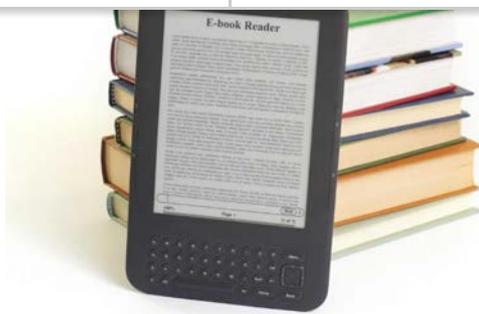
While the main directions of the Guidelines are still solid, cultural and societal changes on the one hand, and technological developments on the other hand, are challenging libraries in new ways. In the last two decades, libraries developed as an enriching space for human interaction, knowledge creation and civic engagement. In several Council of Europe states library legislation already reflects these new concepts and roles in line and compliance with a good number of Council of Europe and European Union documents.

A revised Council of Europe / EBLIDA instrument in the library field can reinforce a Europe-wide effort to strive towards a well-informed, inclusive and democratic society. The aim of this new instrument is not to nurture the illusion that library legislations can be normalised and/or standardised; it aims to respond to the need for a joint effort to formulate a set of principles which conform to democratic values, are compatible with the constitutional principles of member States, and likely to inspire their policies in relation to library legislation and policy.

The last EBLIDA [LIBLEG](#) (library legislation) meeting decided that essential components in any library legislation and policy should focus on the following objectives:

- a) Freedom of expression, access to information and democratic participation;
- b) the European Union 2030 Agenda on sustainable development;
- c) Global and local threats to library operations;
- d) Digital transformation and the expansion of Artificial Intelligence;
- e) Copyright policies and the protection of library heritage.

5. Different practices of e-lending in Europe



of e-lending in Europe?

Is it possible to envisage a uniformity of practices and solutions in this disparate landscape? And what are the respective roles of public authorities and of public libraries in this field?

Despite the progressive development of the e-book offer, libraries still encounter many difficulties in implementing e-lending. Those difficulties are of a variable nature - legal, technical, and financial. For some expert librarians, e-lending is mainly considered under a legal perspective, where the recognition of the derogatory status of digital library transactions in relation to copyright laws legitimises open access practices through customary fair use.

A valuable approach, this methodology nevertheless has some limits: in the European copyright system judges do not have the same latitude in interpreting the law as in the Anglo-Saxon system, where the right of access to digital publications is based on fair use. On the other hand, the judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union (in the case opposing the Dutch Library Association to the Leenrecht Foundation, case C-174/15) made an important step towards the development of e-lending in libraries.

The CJEU ruled that library lending of e-books is analogue as to the lending of printed books, as long as books are lent in the “one copy-one user” model (as soon as one reader returns an e-book, a second reader checks it out, and so on, with no expiration date). They may therefore be included in the scope of the Directive 2006/115 of 12 December 2006 on rental right and lending right, provided that authors at least obtain an equitable remuneration.

Any legal reflection around e-lending should therefore revolve around two principles: on the one hand, the principle of free access to information which is essential for the functioning of libraries, and on the other hand the principle of appropriate remuneration to authors. In legal terms, a balance should be found between citizens’ right to use culture and content in a way that facilitates their individual educational and cultural development and the requests made by right holders. This balance is what EBLIDA calls: sustainable copyright.

Merely legal considerations, however, are analytically limited and do not help find appropriate solutions to the problem raised in libraries. The institutional background and the economic environment surrounding e-lending include the number of transactions of e-books in libraries, the content of the policy of public powers, the nature of the e-book trade (e.g. the popularity of e-books among young people), the practices linked to e-book acquisitions in libraries and the quality of publishers-libraries interrelation. All these factors are determinant in the structure of an e-book economy which, in the book trade, is mainly shaped by the national language(s) spoken in different countries and by their cultural development in terms of reading skills and access to knowledge.

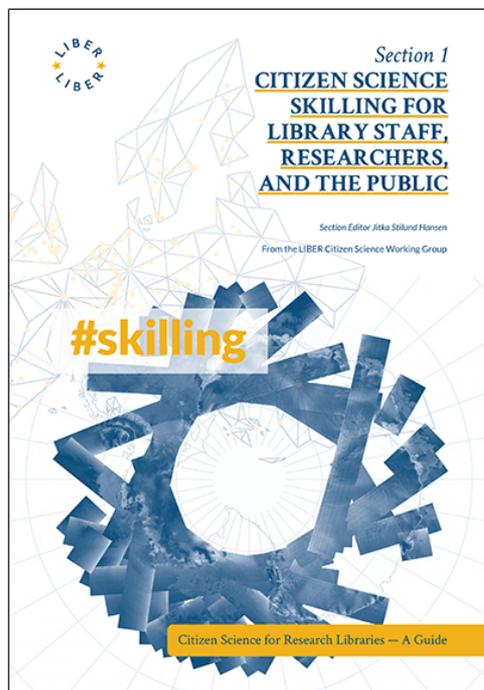
In other terms, the linguistic and cultural scope of the e-book diffusion weighs highly in setting up the objectives and the essence of the library advocacy to be developed at European level, since this advocacy has to be tailored in compliance with the structure of both the e-book trade and the national library system – and it is not taken for granted that measures implemented in one country can also be useful in other countries.

This holistic approach – legal, economic, institutional – has often been neglected in professional library circles as well as in sectorial studies. Apart from providing a more solid foundation to the understanding of e-lending policies, this methodology would also allow networked libraries to play a greater role in the digital distribution of electronic publications and better serve the interests of citizens – even more so that *tous les jeux ne sont pas faits* in the e-book life cycle.

in Spring 2022, has the general objective of laying the foundation of "sustainable copyright" in public libraries through the examination of three particular aspects:

- The dependence of the e-book library trade and library acquisitions on national economic factors, legal constraints and institutional requirements (number of users, percentage of publications available in a digital format, purchasing power of libraries, the role of intermediate layers negotiating with publishers on behalf of libraries);
- The role played by national public authorities in the choice of an e-lending model;
- The potential strength of a networked system where the library demand is aggregated, with an active e-book cultural policy carried out by libraries, alongside and beyond solutions focused on open access practices.

6. A new hands-on guide for Citizen Science



"If libraries can loan out books – why not a citizen science project?"

Dr. Josep Perelló, Open Systems, Barcelona.

The quote says it all. Libraries are per definition open and democratic and for the last few years EBLIDA and other library organisations promote and support Citizen Science.

The quote stems from Barcelona where a training programme on Citizen Science for public libraries where initiated. In other instances, libraries support hands on Citizen Science both in Europe and the US [1] and SciStarter have published the Library and Community Guide to aid the field [2].

Citizen Science is spreading fast and our colleagues from the LIBER Citizen Science working group have published the first section of a new Open Science tools to aid the wider library community, "Citizen Science for Research Libraries – A Guide":

Link: <https://cs4rl.github.io/guide/#/>

WHAT IS IT – AND WHO IS IT FOR?

The guide is an Open Access free for all tool designed to be a practical and compact gateway publication for the purpose of assisting libraries to start setting up a Citizen Science programme. It can aid public libraries in various concrete ways.

The guide addresses the context of research libraries – as becoming the 'go to place' for the new and exciting Open Science – but is also suited to public libraries. It can aid project managers and researchers with no hands on-experience in organising a project from start to finish. Or who are looking for insights on e.g. coordination, communication and data.

MORE TO COME

The first section "Citizen Science Skilling for Library Staff, Researchers, and the Public" was published in December 2021 and allows for users to familiarise themselves and their libraries with planning and communication of Citizen Science projects as well as the management of Citizen Science data.

The remaining sections are published in 2022.

[1] <https://blogs.ifla.org/arl/2021/11/12/go-join-citizen-science-and-the-role-libraries/>

[2]

<https://media.scistarter.org/curated/The+Library+and+Community+Guide+to+Citizen+Science.pdf>

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Events and Dates

January 14-15

[16th International Conference on Digital Libraries \(ICDL\)](#)

Place: Rome, Italy

Organizer: World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology

January 25-26

Place: London, UK

Organizer: International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP)

[2022 European Meeting of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals \(ISMPP\)](#)

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