
IATUL Turns 60

IN THE SERVICE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES – A REVIEW OF IATUL
HISTORY, 1955 - 2015



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Thanks to Paul Sheehan for his paper “A History of IATUL from its origins until 2010”, which is my source for today’s presentation.

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- At the 19th IFLA Session/Council in Vienna in 1953, Dr. E. Hemlin, Director of the library of Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden, proposed that a section should be established within IFLA to represent technical university libraries.
- Dr. Hemlin's suggestion arose from the growing importance of such libraries.
- Dr. Hemlin circulated a letter to 42 potentially interested librarians around the world in April 1954.
- IFLA accepted the proposal, and IATUL was formally admitted as a section within the organization at its meeting in Brussels in September 1955. Dr. E. Hemlin was elected the IATUL President.

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Dr. E. Hemlin, founder of IATUL and its first president (1955-1962)

During his presidency:

- The Association's initial activities focussed on investigating its membership. At this stage, IATUL had 36 members in 17 countries, most of them European.
- In 1962, the General Assembly fulfilled immediately one very significant element of the proposed programme. The IATUL Statutes were amended to extend full membership to libraries of institutions with broad teaching and research portfolios, but which had significant science and technology departments. Formerly only libraries of technical universities had been eligible.

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IATUL Conference 1961



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- Membership increased from 38 institutions in 1962 to 93 in 1966.
- In 1963, the substitution of “Technological” for “Technical” in the English version of its title
- In June 1966, the first IATUL seminar was held in Delft. Its theme: library methods
- IATUL held general meetings for members since being formed in 1955. Initially these were part of IFLA Council meetings. So the meetings in Munich 1956 and Fulda in 1958 followed the IFLA calendar. The first IATUL conference to be so called was convened in Delft in 1961 and began a triennial series until 1973, when a bi-ennial series began, which was succeeded by annual conferences from 1995.

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IATUL Conference Krakow 2004 - group picture

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In the 1970s:

- Conferences were becoming more important and absorbed increased Board attention over the succeeding years.
- An IATUL research grant, in the form of a travelling scholarship worth \$600, was agreed to by the Board in September 1971.
- The IATUL Proceedings became a constant agenda item.
- Published copies of the IATUL Conference Proceedings began.

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In the 1970s:

- Institutional relationships with IFLA, LIBER, etc. were strengthened.
- Decision at Board meeting, University of Twente, November 1975: “IATUL must keep its own identity”.
- Although IATUL had concluded that it must retain its own identity in its relationship with IFLA, the precise terms of that relationship remained under review.

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TUM President Wolfgang A. Herrmann speaking at the IATUL Seminar 2010 in Munich.

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**IATUL seminar 2010 in Munich - seminar
participants**



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In the 1980s:

- One of the more marked areas of IATUL activity in the 1980s was the increasing frequency of seminars, in addition to the biennial conferences.
- Two main kinds of seminar: themed seminars and regional seminars.
 - Themed Seminar: First held in Gothenburg in 1982. Theme: “User Education in the Online Age”.
 - Regional Seminar: First held in North America in 1970s. In July 1984, MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts hosted 25 attendees.
- Conferences were held in Europe.
- By 1989, total membership had increased to 182:
 - 104 were European, 37 North American, 16 were from Asia, 13 from Australia, 10 from Africa and 2 from South America.

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In the 1980s:

- More income allowed for more promotional activities.
- Brochures were designed, essay prizes were offered, research projects were given modest support.

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Ainslie Dewe 2010 at the IATUL Seminar in Munich

Ainslie Dewe was IATUL President from 2010-2012.

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In the 1990s:

- Conferences/seminars continued to be the principal activity of IATUL in the 1990s.
- General Assembly of 1995: “As the distinction between the IATUL conferences and seminars no longer existed in practice, the Board proposes that from 1996 all IATUL conferences/seminars would be known as conferences.”
- General Assembly held annually at each conference.
- The first conference of the 1990s was held in the USA. Subsequent conferences of the decade were hosted by South Africa in 1998, with Brisbane, Australia as host in 2000. Board membership began to reflect this same trend.

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In the 1990s:

- Conference themes began to address specific issues arising from technological developments during a decade when the internet emerged as a fully connected secular world network, and electronic information became a daily reality in the working library environment.
- By 1997 the Board was considering plans for setting up an IATUL web site.
- A new series of IATUL Proceedings was launched: annual publication containing text of papers from IATUL conferences, and other articles.
- An IATUL Newsletter was produced four times a year.

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In the 1990s:

- Strategic Planning document: “Exploring futures for IATUL”, composed by Secretary Michael Breaks, was presented in Edinburgh in November 1999.
- Most of the recommendations were subsequently adopted.

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IATUL Leadership Academy 2014, Krabi



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IATUL Leadership Academy 2014, Krabi



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In the 2000s:

- IATUL annual conferences continued to flourish.
- The international range of conference locations was maintained.
- In 2004, autumn seminars were begun.
- The development of the IATUL website and related services.
- The new technology supported two main functions:
 1. The public web site
 2. Membership database

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In the 2000s:

- The Board conducted an opinion survey of members in 2007/8. The main benefits of membership were perceived to be current awareness of library developments and networking. Most important current services were perceived to be the annual conference and the web page.
- Name changed to The International Association of Scientific and Technological University Libraries in Leuven in 2009.
- In Helsinki in 2014, the name was changed to IATUL – International Association of University Libraries.

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“Challenges of networking library services”
workshop

Florianopolis, Brazil - 2013



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IATUL Board 2014

from left to right: Alena Ptak-Danchak,
Imogen Garner, Gwendolyn Ebbett,
Fatt-Cheong Choy, Elisha Chiware,
Reiner Kallenborn, Irma Pasanen