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Benin National Library
emblem relief in Porto-Novo, Benin

Photo by Kulttuurinavigaattori (Heikki Kastemaa).

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PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC READING IN BENIN: NEW CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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BIBLIOTHÈQUE PUBLIQUE ET LECTURE PUBLIQUE AU BENIN: LES NOUVEAUX DÉFIS DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES PUBLIQUES

Par Folaké M. Tchitou
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True institutions of access to information, to knowledge and culture, libraries serve as essential support for education and training, study and research. They constitute a living memory of society, which ensures the conservation, dissemination, and renewal of cultural and scientific heritage. Depending on their nature and, for the most part, their objective, they can take different forms and are generally of different types.

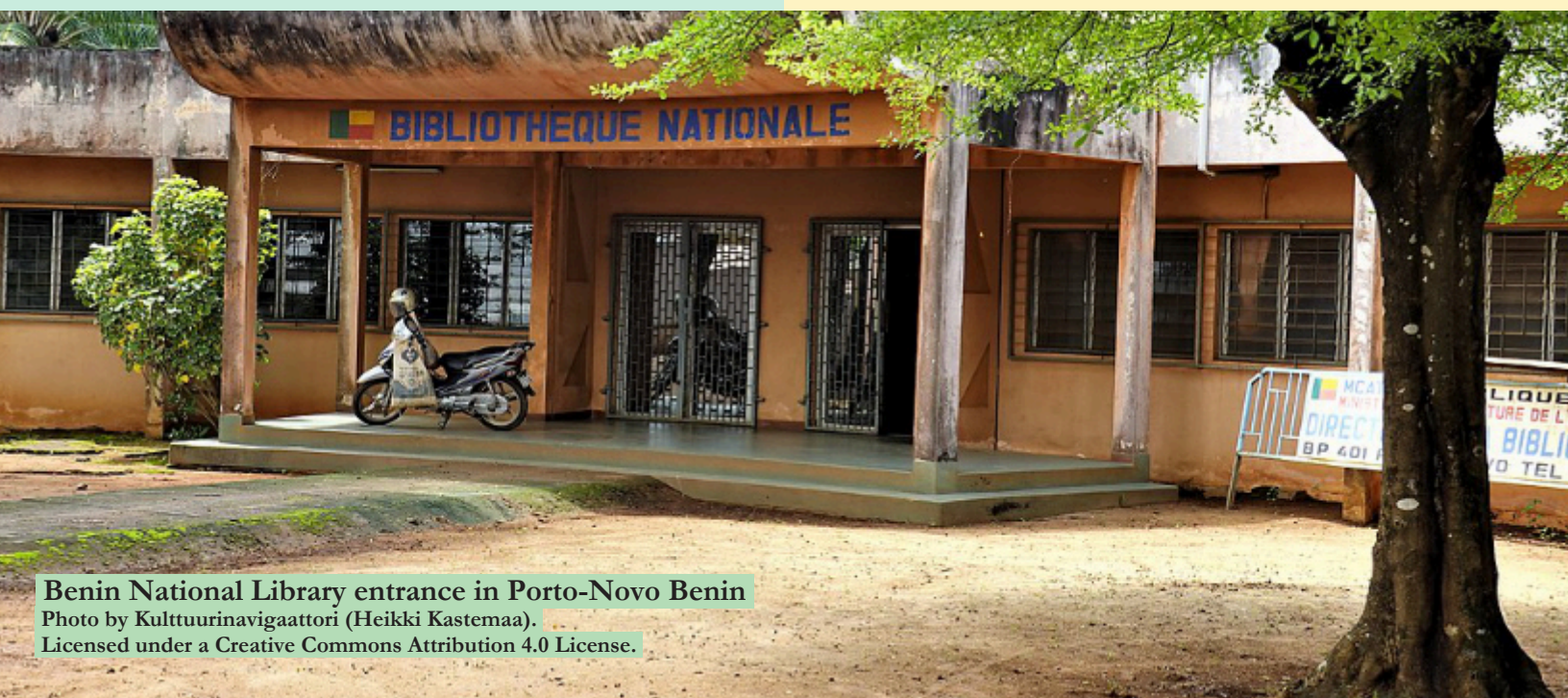
Véritables institutions d'accès à l'information, à la connaissance et à la culture, les bibliothèques servent de soutien indispensable à l'éducation et à la formation, à l'étude et à la recherche. Elles constituent une mémoire vivante de la société, qui assure la conservation, la diffusion et le renouvellement d'un patrimoine culturel et scientifique. Suivant leur nature et pour la plupart leur objectif, elles peuvent revêtir différentes formes et sont généralement de différents types.

Published in "Libraries in the modern world," Pierre Carbone's column provides a rough definition of public libraries since it is precisely this type of library that this article deals with. For this famous author, "public libraries are libraries dependent on public institutions. They are common assets of the community they serve, and are by nature places for sharing knowledge and culture. Their mission is to make publications by past and present authors available to all, without any censorship and without the choice of documents being determined by a political or public authority." This type of so-called public library is fundamentally different from others, notably private, community, confessional, etc. due to the public or state nature of the creative institutions. But then, do all public libraries do public reading?

In Bertrand Calenge's "Notebooks" (Saturday January 25, 2014), the definition of the theme of current public reading is very broad, if we are to believe Wikipedia: "Public reading is the set of actions carried out around the book and the culture of writing in general. It is traditionally driven by the world of libraries." In general, public reading is seen as all general literature and actions implemented around books in general offered by a public library or another type of library to all categories of the public with a view to contributing to the quest for know-how and knowledge, for entertainment but also for the awakening and development of a taste for books and reading among young people and children. Public reading embraces all areas of knowledge as opposed to the reading offered by specialized libraries which deal with only a specific area of knowledge.

Paru dans "Les bibliothèques dans le monde actuel" la chronique de Pierre Carbone fait une ébauche de définition des bibliothèques publiques puisque c'est justement de ce type de bibliothèque que traite cet article. Pour ce célèbre auteur, « les bibliothèques publiques sont des bibliothèques dépendant d'institutions publiques. Ce sont des biens communs de la collectivité qu'elles desservent, et sont par nature des lieux de partage du savoir et de la culture. Leur mission est de mettre à la disposition de tous des publications des auteurs passés et présents, en dehors de toute censure et sans que le choix des documents soit fixé par une autorité politique ou publique ». Ce type de bibliothèque dite publique se distingue fondamentalement des autres notamment privée, communautaire, confessionnelle... de par la nature publique ou étatique des institutions créatrices. Mais alors, toutes les bibliothèques publiques font-elles de la lecture publique ?

Dans "les Carnets de notes" de Bertrand Calenge (Samedi 25 janvier 2014), la définition du thème lecture publique courante est très large, si l'on en croit Wikipedia : « La lecture publique est l'ensemble des actions menées autour du livre et de la culture de l'écrit en général. Elle est traditionnellement conduite par le monde des bibliothèques. ». De façon générale, la lecture publique est aperçue comme l'ensemble de la littérature générale et des actions mises en place autour du livre en général offertes par une bibliothèque publique ou d'un autre type à toutes les catégories de public en vue de contribuer à la quête du savoir et de la connaissance, au divertissement mais aussi à l'éveil et au développement du goût du livre et de la lecture chez les publics jeunes et les enfants. La lecture publique embrasse tous les domaines de la connaissance en opposition à la lecture offerte par les bibliothèques spécialisées qui ne s'occupent qu'un domaine précis de la connaissance.



Benin National Library entrance in Porto-Novo Benin

Photo by Kulttuurinavigaattori (Heikki Kastemaa).

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In Benin, public reading is ensured by a network of public libraries called the institutional public reading network but also by a private system made up of community, private, faith-based libraries and international institutions. This collection of libraries and places of culture constitute the arsenal par excellence available to the country to support national education but also to encourage and arouse a taste for books and reading among all social classes, particularly young people.

If the majority of libraries in the private reading network are located in urban and surrounding centers, the State has given it the option of serving isolated, peri-urban and even rural localities through its public reading network. This political and social choice constitutes a fundamental issue for public authorities who are guarantors of equity in national collective development. The institutional public reading network relies on around forty public libraries with variable names, whether departmental or municipal libraries, reading and cultural activities centers (CLAC) or public reading centers (CLP). Far from the ideal in terms of national coverage, particularly in sensitive areas, Benin's institutional public reading network is working as best it can to broaden its bases, whether it involves repairing and restoring infrastructure under way, degradation or construction of new buildings meeting modern cultural standards. On this last aspect especially, enormous challenges remain to be met based on the political will to elevate cultural and literary issues to the rank of absolute priority such as education, health, security and even the economy.

Another no less important issue in public reading is the renewal of collections and daily programming. If the first has seen significant progress over the past decade, the daily operation of public libraries is still at an embryonic stage. Indeed, through library management institutions including the Directorate of the National Library of Benin, millions in funds are injected each year into the acquisition of new book productions for the benefit of the entire institutional public reading network. But we know that the enrichment and constant renewal of documentary funds are not always enough to win over and retain library audiences, as needs are growing so quickly. The system for marketing, innovation, networking, cultural and literary activities are all tools that help to guarantee attendance in libraries. On this front, the private public reading network whose leaders are the media library of the French Institute of Benin, the libraries of the CAEB network and the Benin Excellence libraries of the Vallet Foundation have made it a workhorse and which is very successful for them indeed! The

Au Bénin, la lecture publique est assurée par un réseau de bibliothèques publiques appelé réseau institutionnel de lecture publique mais aussi par un dispositif privé composé de bibliothèques communautaires, privés, confessionnelles et d'institutions internationales. Cet ensemble de bibliothèques et lieux de culture constitue l'arsenal par excellence dont dispose le pays pour accompagner l'éducation nationale mais aussi pour inciter et susciter le goût du livre et de la lecture chez l'ensemble des couches sociales notamment les jeunes.

Si la majorité des bibliothèques du réseau privé de lecture est implantée dans les centres urbains et environnants, l'Etat lui a fait l'option de desservir à travers son réseau de lecture publique, les localités enclavées, péri-urbaines voire rurales. Ce choix politique et social constitue un enjeu fondamental pour les pouvoirs publics qui sont garants de l'équité dans l'épanouissement collectif national. Le réseau institutionnel de lecture publique s'appuie sur une quarantaine de bibliothèques publiques à dénomination variable qu'elles soient des bibliothèques départementales ou communales, des centres de lecture et d'animation culturelle (CLAC) ou encore des centres de lecture publique (CLP). Bien loin de l'idéal en matière de couverture nationale notamment en zone sensible, le réseau institutionnel de lecture publique du Bénin s'active tant bien que mal à élargir ses bases, qu'il s'agisse de réfection et restauration des infrastructures en voie de dégradation ou de construction de nouveaux édifices répondant aux normes modernes culturelles. Sur ce dernier volet justement, d'énormes défis restent à relever partant de la volonté politique d'élever les questions culturelles et littéraires au rang de priorité absolue telles l'éducation, la santé, la sécurité et même l'économie.

Un autre enjeu non moins important de la lecture publique est le renouvellement des collections et l'animation quotidienne. Si le premier connaît d'importants progrès depuis une décennie, l'animation quotidienne des bibliothèques publiques est encore à un stade embryonnaire. En effet, à travers les institutions de gestion des bibliothèques dont la Direction de la Bibliothèque nationale du Bénin, des millions de fonds sont injectés chaque année dans l'acquisition de nouvelles productions livresques au profit de l'ensemble du réseau institutionnel de lecture publique. Mais l'on sait que l'enrichissement et le renouvellement constant de fonds documentaire ne suffisent pas toujours à conquérir et fidéliser les publics des bibliothèques, tant les besoins s'accroissent à grande vitesse. Le système de marketing, l'innovation, le réseautage, l'animation culturelle et littéraire sont autant d'outils qui contribuent à garantir l'affluence dans les bibliothèques. Sur ce front, le réseau privé de lecture publique dont les leaders sont la médiathèque de l'institut français du Bénin, les bibliothèques du réseau CAEB et les bibliothèques Bénin Excellence de la Fondation Vallet en ont fait un cheval de

institutional network would benefit from taking example and drawing inspiration from the marketing, animation and current training practices of the facilitators of these libraries to improve the quality of services.

But above all these issues mentioned, an essential and existential reality faces today's libraries: digital technology and its derivatives. The mastery and use of new digital tools have become must-haves for the information and documentation sectors due to the large quantity of information to be processed, the diversity of sources and the need to access information as quickly as possible, at any time and above all wherever the need arises. This issue is already a reality in almost all developed and emerging countries but still constitutes an enormous challenge for the majority of countries in Africa south of the Sahara. Benin's public libraries also do not escape this reality despite the constant and sustained efforts of those in power to meet this challenge, considered one of the important ones of our generation. The digital revolution that began at the top echelons of the State almost a decade ago through the dematerialization of administrative services has had a definite impact on cultural and literary issues, the first effects of which are the digitalization of the allocation of ISBN numbers and the deposit legal, the dematerialization of some literary animation services and the digitalization of current loan services. From the digitization of the collections of the national library, through the ongoing networking of all departmental libraries, CLACs and CLPs, the institutional public reading network is taking stock of this new challenge even if it is still somewhat removed from the innovation and creativity of the libraries of the private public reading network.

The ambition of the teams in charge of managing these places of culture is to provide these public libraries with modern and innovative tools, starting from the services offered through the equipment used and even the staff deployed in the structures in order to make attractive and competitive public libraries. At a time of rapid and growing development of social networks and all information technologies, libraries, all trends combined, are called upon to reinvent themselves, diversify offerings and offer services projected towards the future in terms of technology. Like the futuristic libraries of the Northern countries, the network of public libraries in Benin reinvents itself daily and projects towards a radiant future that meets or exceeds current standards and requirements in terms of management, creativity and innovation.

bataille et qui leur réussit très bien d'ailleurs ! Le réseau institutionnel gagnerait à prendre exemple et s'inspirer des pratiques de marketing, d'animation et de formation courante des animateurs de ces bibliothèques pour améliorer la qualité des prestations.

Mais au-dessus de tous ces enjeux cités, une réalité essentielle et existentielle se dresse face aux bibliothèques d'aujourd'hui : le numérique et ses dérivés. La maîtrise et l'utilisation des nouveaux outils numériques et digitales sont devenues pour les secteurs de l'information et de la documentation, des must have en raison de la grande quantité d'information à traiter, de la diversité des sources et du besoin d'accéder à l'information le plus rapidement possible, à tout moment et surtout partout où le besoin se fait sentir. Cet enjeu est déjà une réalité dans presque tous les pays développés et émergents mais constitue encore un énorme défi pour la majorité des pays de l'Afrique au Sud du Sahara. Les bibliothèques publiques du Bénin ne dérogent pas elles aussi à cette réalité malgré les efforts constants et soutenus des gouvernants pour relever ce défi considéré comme l'un des importants de notre génération. La révolution numérique entamée au sommet de l'Etat depuis bientôt une décennie à travers la dématérialisation des services administratifs a eu un impact certain sur les questions culturelles et littéraires dont les premiers effets ressentis sont la digitalisation de l'attribution des numéros ISBN et du dépôt légal, la dématérialisation de quelques services d'animation littéraire et la digitalisation des services de prêt en cours. De la numérisation des collections de la bibliothèque nationale, en passant par la mise en réseau en cours de toutes les bibliothèques départementales, des CLAC et des CLP, le réseau institutionnel de lecture publique prend la mesure de ce nouvel enjeu même s'il est encore quelque peu éloigné de l'innovation et de la créativité des bibliothèques du réseau privé de lecture publique.

L'ambition des équipes en charge de la gestion de ces lieux de culture, est de doter ces bibliothèques publiques d'outils modernes et innovants partant des prestations proposées en passant par le matériel utilisé et même le personnel déployé dans les structures afin de rendre les bibliothèques publiques attrayantes et compétitives. A l'heure du développement rapide et croissant des réseaux sociaux et de l'ensemble des technologies de l'information, les bibliothèques, toutes tendances confondues, sont appelées à se réinventer, diversifier les offres et proposer des services projetés vers le futur en matière de technologie. Telles les bibliothèques futuristes des pays du Nord, le réseau de bibliothèques publiques du Bénin se réinvente quotidiennement et se projette vers un avenir radieux à la hauteur voire au-dessus des normes et exigences actuelles en matière de gestion, de créativité et d'innovation.

THE EDITORS



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EDITORIAL

Hello everyone!

Welcome to Vol. 37 No. 4 of International Leads! As always, we thank everyone for the contributions from different parts of the globe and of course the valuable contents from ALA IRRT Chair Mark Mattson and Vice Chair Carol Brey.

In this issue we begin with Public Libraries and Public Reading in Benin by Folakè M. Tchitou on reinventing towards a radiant future. There's also the possibility of applying for the International Librarians Networking Program (ILNP) 2024, do consider this. There's also a feature on San Juan del Sur's IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant: Sueños3D (Dreams in 3D) which is the establishment of the first 3D printing course in Nicaragua for local youth, a resounding success. Another volunteer opportunity to think about would be the Knowledge Empowering Youth (KEY), a registered charity operating in Canada and Kenya, they are now looking for additional volunteers. There's also an interview with one of the KEY volunteers, Christie Koontz of the School of Information, Florida State University. Maarit Jaakola also talks about BookTok, BookTube and Bookstagram as communities for literary evaluations in The Revival of Book Reviews in Social Media. Lastly we look at IFLA WLIC 2023, which was held last August in Rotterdam, through the lens with photos from those who attended.

Wishing everyone holiday cheers and happy reading!

Submit to us news on events, projects, initiatives, activities, achievements, grants, conferences at: ala.irrt.leads@gmail.com.



MESSAGE FROM THE IRRT CHAIR

Mark Mattson

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In the last issue, I wrote about the many initiatives and changes our round table has on our agenda for this year and I am happy to report we are making good progress toward our goals.

First, I am delighted to announce that after many hours of planning, presenting, and incorporating feedback on the proposed IRRT Reorganization Plan, the Executive Board has held a vote on the proposal, and it has been officially approved! This approval means that the reorganization is no longer a proposal, but is now an active initiative and we will be transitioning to the new committee structure after the ALA Annual Conference this coming summer (2024). The executive board is working on transition planning, and we have already started to transition a couple of committees in preparing for the full implementation of the new structure in July. As the Chair-Elect also has the duty to recruit and appoint members to open committee seats each year, Carol will have the opportunity to appoint members into the new structure this Spring and there may be some new opportunities for service within our round table. More communication about the transition will be coming in the near future, but in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about the reorganization.

The second big announcement for this column is that the rewriting of the IRRT bylaws is set to be completed in time for inclusion on the spring ballot! This has been a project which has been in progress for

several years now (developing a common RTCA bylaw template, template revisions necessitated by changes in the larger organization bylaws and statutes, etc.), but the final template is now close to being approved on all levels. IRRT has already done the work to rewrite the bylaws (which going forward must be called “rules”) to conform to the template and the IRRT executive board will be proactive and vote on the new document in time for it to be added to the ballot for a vote from the membership. The majority of the changes are superficial, but we will hold an informational webinar prior to the membership vote so that folks can get a full understanding of the revision process and what substantive changes are being proposed.

In addition to these large-scale projects IRRT has been getting a lot of good work done over the last several months. We have appointed liaisons to other ALA entities (the Intellectual Freedom Committee, the Committee on Professional Ethics, and the Membership Recruitment Assembly), drafted a resolution for ALA council in celebration of the round table’s anniversary, once again sponsored an ALA Emerging Leader Program participant, and have been undertaking the regular work of the round table within our many committees. Many thanks to all of you who are serving on committees, planning programming, or representing IRRT in other forums!

Finally, while IRRT does not have any official programming scheduled for LibLearnX in Baltimore this coming January, Executive Board members are planning to be available on January 19th to meet with folks who want to talk about IRRT initiatives, have questions about the round table, or want to get more involved. If you are planning to attend the event, please stop by and say hello!

In closing, I wish you all a productive and enjoyable end of the year in your IRRT-related endeavors and your professional work as well. Thank you, again, for all that you do to make IRRT a wonderful organization in which to participate!



MESSAGE FROM THE IRRT CHAIR-ELECT

Carol Brey

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I mentioned in my last column how our world seems to grow smaller and more connected every day, with international issues becoming increasingly relevant at home. Through my involvement with libraries on the international level – as a past-president of ALA, member of IRRT, and twelve years with the U.S. State Department – I have seen the impact that we as U.S. librarians can have on libraries around the world. There are excellent libraries in other countries, but during my travels it was clear that the vast majority of librarians still considered U.S. libraries to be the “gold standard” of libraries internationally. Librarians around the world can learn so much from us if we are willing to share – and we can learn from librarians in other countries as well.

That is why I encourage you to tune in to one of ALA's webinars. Our next one will take place on Wednesday December 13 at 10:00 am ET, and is entitled Unlocking Opportunities: The Benefits of Attending the ALA Annual Conference. The webinar will feature ALA past-president Loida Garcia-Febo, as well as librarians from El Salvador who recently attended an ALA Conference. I will be moderating the webinar, which will be conducted in Spanish. ALA webinars are typically conducted in English, but this one will be in Spanish in order to reach Spanish-speaking librarians globally. You can listen to past webinars by going to the ALA website [here](#).



Another great way to learn more about the work of librarians internationally is to be active in IRRT! A call for volunteers to serve in IRRT positions will be going out in January, so please think about stepping up – there are so many ways that you can serve, and further our work to make libraries stronger, everywhere.

International Librarians Networking Program (ILNP) 2024

We are pre-announcing the opportunity to apply for the International Librarians Networking Program (ILNP) 2024 of IRRT.

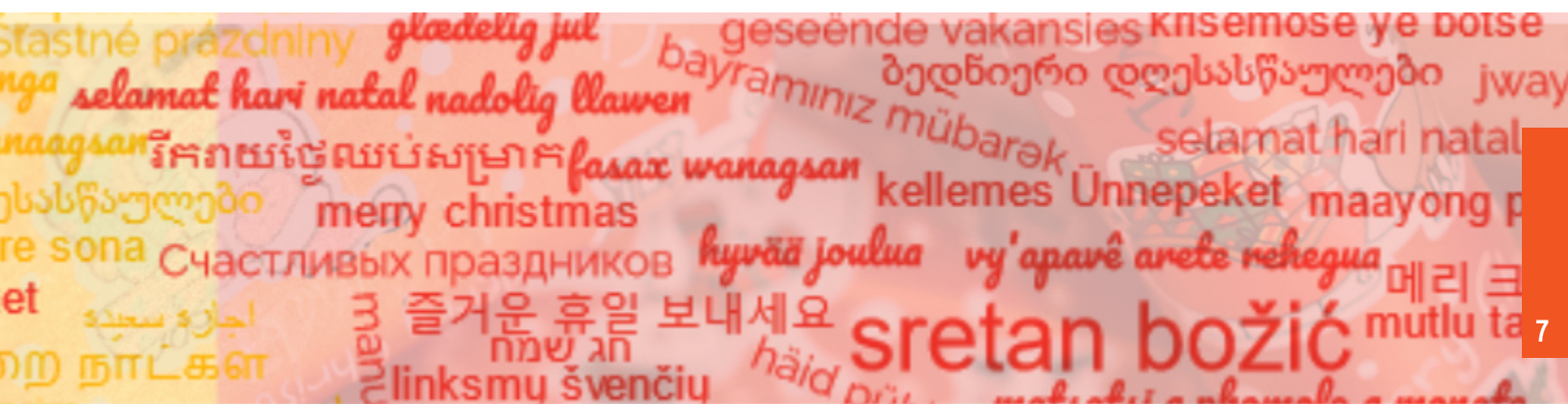
The goal of the ILNP is to assist librarians from around the world to network and expand their skills in librarianship through a cooperative and collaborative program. This program is designed to be self-guided, allowing participants to form a collaborative relationship with one another.

This program has successfully been held for four consecutive years (since 2020). We regularly receive a couple hundred applications from over 56 countries; however, due to the limited number of volunteers, we are only able to accept between 100-200 applications per year.

Mark your calendars to visit our application site in January. The program will run from March to May 2023. Participants need to plan for two to three hours per week for those three months: ask your supervisors now! Each team produces their own poster to receive a certificate of participation for their professional development dossiers.

If you want to volunteer to be a liaison, please contact irrt.networking@gmail.com.

For more information please go to: <https://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram>.



IRRT MISSION ENHANCEMENT GRANT: SUEÑOS3D (DREAMS IN 3D)

Establishment of the First 3D Printing Course in Nicaragua for Local Youth

In 2021 the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca/Library's (SJDS) 3D printing center, Sueños3D, located in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua received the American Library Association's International Relations Roundtable (IRRT) Mission Enhancement Grant award of \$1,000. The grant helped support the development of a pilot training program in 3D modeling and printing for local youth.

In 2019, the San Juan del Sur Library (SJDS) opened Sueños3D, a 3D printing center designed to serve the needs of local businesses and the community. A central mission of Sueños3D is to offer educational training in 3D technology to local youth and eventually offer products that will be used by the community and local businesses. In 2022 Sueños3D initiated a 3D printing training program. Four middle school girls enrolled in a pilot course offered twice a week, March through May 2022. The course consisted of nine class sessions, each of increasing complexity

and included hands-on work in modeling and 3D printing, short lectures, demos, and video tutorials.

The enthusiasm this generated led to pilot course B which consisted of three girls and one boy. The course instructor, a library staff member, has acquired the requisite technology and pedagogical skills to teach these classes. 3D printing is a manufacturing process that creates a physical object from a digital file. 3D technology works by adding layer upon layer of plastic to build up a complete object.

The original idea was to hire a trainer from Managua to help develop the course. The pandemic intervened making it difficult to recruit a trainer. The funds provided paid a stipend for the local young man who created his own curriculum and taught all the classes throughout the project. This change allowed us the funds to expand the program and initiate the pilot project first. The grant award initiated this



Students in Pilot Course A



Local trainer working on the curriculum for the pilot class

project, which was ongoing over 2 years. The project officially ended in November 2022 with certificates for the high school students being awarded at the 21st Anniversary of the SJDS Library. The collaboration between IRRIT's Grant Award and the generosity of the Hester J Hodgdon Libraries for All Foundation and its donors allowed for an excellent outcome and covered the entire \$2995 cost of the project.

The trainer began offering the pilot course in March of 2022 to four girls who were very excited to learn about this new technology. The course formed the foundation of future classes which have since been offered to middle and high schoolers from the community. In anticipation of the startup classes the 3D printing center in the SJDS Library was enlarged and redesigned to better accommodate groups of student learners. It was initially

Critical and creative thinking skills	Collaborative learning	Empowering students to continue learning	Instructor's pedagogical success
Students are acquiring new expertise, new knowledge, and enhancing their computer skills by learning modeling software (Tinkercad), learning how to operate 3D printers, and ultimately converting 2D objects to 3D.	Students are learning to solve problems, think critically, and develop products in teams as they collaborate with each other to plan, execute, and display their projects.	The students describe excitement and enthusiasm about the course content as learning activities and goals become more challenging.	Students recognize the instructor as an excellent teacher who presents new information and activities at an appropriate pace, makes complex concepts easy to grasp, and displays patience while motivating the students to advance in the course.
Students are nurturing their imagination and creative abilities and strengthening problem-solving skills as they become "creators" of 3D objects.		Students express interest in learning more about 3D modeling and printing.	Students particularly appreciate video tutorials selected by the instructor which reinforce difficult concepts and serve as examples of the excellent use of supplemental teaching materials.
Creating 3D objects requires increasingly complex tasks. Students are developing concentration skills and the ability to complete complicated tasks at an accelerated pace.			

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outfitted with two 3D printers, four chrome books and requisite 3D printing and modeling software (Simplify 3D, Tinkercad, and Fusion 360), reinforced tables and shelving, assembly space, storage for filament, and easy access to electrical outlets. The SJDS Library also has a classroom space with an overhead projector and tables and chairs for 8 students.

The pilot project was a resounding success, so much so that four additional courses were offered in 2022-2023, to a total of 23 students (18 females and 5 males.) The surveys collected at the completion of these courses inform us that the program is very successful, and that students are eager to enroll in these classes. With additional financial support we hope to scale up the program to offer more advanced instruction, to increase the number of courses, and to hire and train additional 3D technology instructors.

Students in the 3rd and 4th class cohorts completed open-question surveys. The following summary of their comments demonstrate ways in which they are developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and

creative skills. Their comments also illustrate the instructor's pedagogical success.

The Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for All (HJH) is a Colorado-based, tax exempt, 501(c)(3) charitable foundation established to support the SJDS Library and promote lending libraries in Nicaragua. In collaboration with Rotary International and other service organizations, the Foundation develops programs to strengthen local schools, support community development and leadership, and provide educational and trade learning opportunities in rural Nicaraguan communities. The SJDS Library is located near the town center in the municipality of San Juan del Sur, a coastal town on the Pacific Ocean in southwest Nicaragua. The Sueños3D Center is an outgrowth of a partnership between the HJH Foundation and the University of Maryland Libraries. It supports the Foundation's educational mission by offering training in the use of new technology to community youth. The 3D printer project is one of the first in Nicaragua and is a scalable and replicable project.



Students in the pilot class A receiving their certificates



THE HESTER J. HODGDON LIBRARIES FOR ALL FOUNDATION PRESENTS:

Presented by:
Jane Mirandette, Lily Griner, Preston Tobery

Sueños 3D - Dreams in 3D: The First Public Library 3D Print Center in Nicaragua - How a Nicaraguan library partnered with a University to create a 3D Print Center and with grant support, developed a training program for students in Nicaragua

Sueños 3D Center Launched in Nicaraguan Library

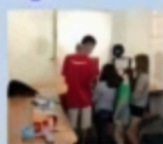
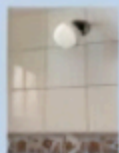
The mission of the HJL Foundation is to leverage the power of education and literacy to develop, support and sustain strong leadership and economic vitality for local communities in Nicaragua.

In partnership with University of Maryland librarians in 2018, the Library opened a 3D print center entitled Sueños 3D.

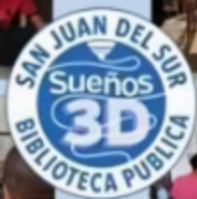
Sueños 3D Objectives:

- Introduce cutting edge technology
- Provide training opportunities
- Promote innovation and entrepreneurship
- Provide income for San Juan del Sur Library

Creating Solutions



3D Technology Course



Partnerships



Engaging Imaginations



Sueños 3D Center Accomplishments

- Trained San Juan del Sur Library staff and community members in 2019 and 2021
- Produced 3D printed face shields in response to COVID-19 in 2020
- Created products needed in the community
- Received ALA IRRT grant to offer Nicaraguan students courses in 3D technology
- Reconfigured part of library to better support Center activities and courses
- Offered community members access to a technology that engages their imaginations



This Grant was covered in a poster given at the June 2021, ALA Convention in the IRRT Global Solutions Sector.

Visit our website: www.librariesforall.org | Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HJLlibrariesforall> | Email: jane.mirandette@gmail.com

Canadian-Kenyan Charity

KEY

**Empowers Underserved Youth,
Seeks Additional Volunteers**



For over a decade and a half, Knowledge Empowering Youth (KEY), a registered charity operating in Canada and Kenya, has been a beacon of hope for underserved children seeking a well-rounded education. With a far-reaching network encompassing 46 vibrant primary and secondary school libraries across Ghana, Tanzania, and 12 counties in Kenya, KEY has been instrumental in bridging educational gaps and nurturing the intellectual growth of these young learners.

These libraries, strategically placed in various communities, not only offer children access to a 21st-century global education but also serve as anchors, grounding them in their local culture and traditions. Beyond providing essential reading materials and resources, KEY's library management system includes a governance constitution document that promotes civic education. By actively involving students in the daily management of these libraries, KEY champions the values and practices of democracy, instilling in these young minds a deep appreciation for civic engagement.

In Kenya, libraries are woefully lacking in 98% of primary schools and most high schools.. The absence of accessible libraries has led to a significant knowledge divide and substantial barriers to language and digital proficiency, particularly among children hailing from low-income backgrounds. This glaring gap in foundational learning resources makes it exponentially more challenging to prepare school-age children efficiently and effectively to become competent, successful citizens who can compete on the international stage while nurturing their dreams and realizing their full potential.

The remarkable impact of KEY's libraries has not gone unnoticed. They have been recognized with

prestigious awards, including first, second, and third place honors at the National Library of the Year awards. These accolades serve as a testament to KEY's unwavering commitment to empowering youth through education and ensuring that no child is left behind in the pursuit of knowledge and their dreams.

Are you interested in gaining international experience and supporting children abroad?

KEY provides a volunteer opportunity suitable for trained librarians. This unpaid position is designed to individuals who wish to offer two to three months of on-site services, sharing knowledge, technical assistance and training, at one or more of KEY's school libraries.

Are you a librarian, school librarian, teacher-librarian, library media specialist or student/graduate of library and information studies, who is also outgoing, positive and self-disciplined? Do you have a love of learning and adventure and a passion to promote teenage and child-hood literacy? Does the idea of packing your bags and immersing yourself in a new culture appeal to you?

Are you able to work independently and respond to fluid and frequently shifting priorities with grace and aplomb? Does the idea of helping make a lasting difference in the lives of underserved children, not just in urban but also far-flung places, put a smile on your face?

Visit our website at <http://www.keylibraries.org> for more information or contact Nyakundi James Nyambane, Head Librarian, nyakundi@keylibraries.org

“Key’s mission is to drive meaningful change in Kenya’s education system by providing fully functioning school libraries in Kenya. Our vision is that every school-aged child has access to the resources of a library because it is key to a children’s progress and potential, regardless of the child’s background.”



**Interview with a KEY volunteer,
Christie Koontz,
School of Information,
Florida State University**

When and where did you go while volunteering in the program?

In April of 2023, I joined KEY as a workshop facilitator teaching storytelling and marketing. After the three-day workshop attended by KEY librarians, we went out to visit the actual schools and libraries, some rural and some not. The impact KEY has had not only on the staff and students but each community is staggering. The students are geared to the latest technologies and reading and opportunities for creativity.

What was the most impactful piece of the program?

The KEY program goes straight to the core of learning by creating a free space, a physical library, where students and staff and often families can engage in reading, exploring the world through same and games and technology. The library is a mecca—often for the entire community.

What was the most challenging?

The most challenging is perhaps accepting the new environment of Africa and within Kenya. It is sometimes rural and hence it is a challenge to understand the mores and habits and to understand and meet the people where they are. This is an exciting opportunity for an open-minded enthusiastic student or professional to spend time and create new opportunities. The students are so enthusiastic as is staff for the new technologies and learning media.

What suggestions would you make to interested librarians?

I would schedule a Zoom meeting with KEY staff to learn more about the timeframe, expectations, and what they need as well as what the individual may bring to the KEY program. It is a two-way street.



Knowledge
Empowering
Youth

THE REVIVAL OF BOOK REVIEWS IN SOCIAL MEDIA: BOOKTOK, BOOKTUBE AND BOOKSTAGRAM AS COMMUNITIES FOR LITERARY EVALUATIONS

Maarit Jaakkola

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How might one encourage young people to engage more with literature? The matter of promoting reading has emerged as a significant policy concern over the past decade. During this period, a decline in the reading habits of the youth has been observed, with traditional literature facing fierce competition from easily accessible and more fast-paced audiovisual forms of amusement and entertainment. Within this discourse, considerable optimism has been directed towards reviews produced and disseminated on digital platforms and social networking sites. The anticipation is that by engaging with peers' content on books and perhaps even producing content by themselves, young people will rediscover the intrinsic pleasure of reading. Notably, optimism has been stirred by the reviewspheres on visual platforms such as Instagram, video-sharing platforms like YouTube and TikTok, and the book community site Goodreads.

On BookTube, ordinary people interested in books publish vlogs on YouTube, the video-sharing platform by Google started in 2005, where they describe, interpret and judge books they have selected. BookTok videos on TikTok, established in 2018, are shorter and often more affected by the meme-like expression of the platform. On Instagram, the image app owned by Meta since 2012, there is an equivalent community of reviewers within or closely related to the book community of Bookstagram. The major three online book communities are affected by services that have been originally designed for sharing reading experiences. Above all, the Amazon-owned community reading and social cataloging site Goodreads, established in 2006, hosts amateur reviews and encourages social or shared reading methods such as buddy reading where like-minded people can reach out to each other for making more out of their reading experiences. Many social media book reviewers travel between all these platforms. All reading communities are online lifestyle communities where people not only want to verbalize, make visible and share their experiences of reading but also intend to become visible as readers, while acknowledged by the community members.

In my recent research anthology *Reviewing culture online: Post-institutional cultural critique across platforms* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022) I wanted to place the different communities of reviewing onto the same conceptual map, pointing out their differences and interconnections. Reviews produced by professionals and amateurs – as well as semi-professionals and professional amateurs – are very different in their form, function and production contexts, but among audiences they may fulfill similar functions. Audiences of book and literature reviews want to know whether the new books in the market are worth investing one's time and money in. Alternatively, audiences want to keep updated about the newest books in order to feel connected to the social world where topical books are discussed and bookish lifestyles are maintained.

Reviewing and reading have a lot to do with learning. A sequel for my book, the forthcoming research anthology *Pedagogical opportunities of the review genre: Learning in cultures of evaluation* (Routledge), discusses reviews and reviewing as processes of teaching, learning and reflecting. With an attempt to unleash the pedagogical potential of the genre, I am addressing the pedagogical dimensions in analyzing and producing reviews in informal, non-formal and formal learning contexts. While reviews are typically taught as argumentative, persuasive and evaluative texts at school with the professionally produced journalistic and aesthetic reviews as the ideal, in libraries and cultural organizations reviews can be seen as a channel and incentive for participation and co-design.

For libraries, this can mean more than just following and making visible TikTokers and their BookTok reviews; libraries could also take the initiative to facilitate and support the production of book reviews in local settings. Supporting review production related to books by local or prize-winning authors, or maybe niche and marginalized or less known authors, can make a significant contribution to the literary discussions. In workshops and on similar occasions, libraries could facilitate not only the reflection and writing processes of reviews but also the critical process of selecting books for review and contextualizing them, possibly with other books and previous production by the same author.

Understanding genres and formats

As intriguing as the idea may sound, we need to keep in mind that librarians are not – and are not supposed to be – teachers or supervisors of media production processes. Libraries can make a difference by hosting production nests and, perhaps, hiring professional facilitators. Still, the biggest hindrances for harnessing the potential of BookTube, Bookstagram and especially the newest community, BookTok, may lie somewhere else.

For those who are familiar with the institutional concept of book review, the genre as it is encountered in quality newspapers and cultural magazines, it may be challenging to understand the new development of the genre in social networks. Namely, a quick plunge into the algorithmically defined environment may deliver a picture of individuals behaving strangely: talking loud and quickly, laughing and grimacing, holding books for material artifacts, like part of home decoration or atmosphere-creating props in Insta-friendly image constellations, rather than intellectual achievements. The ways of expression are versatile, and following what reviewers have to say is often expected to be fun – reviewtainment.

If we dismiss the crucial role of the format in which reviews are delivered, we may dismiss and misunderstand the entire phenomenon of vernacular reviewing. The genre lives another life in BookTube, Bookstagram and BookTok than in the institutional environment where it has a relatively constant and stable form, pre-defined by the publisher and manifest in the design of the outlet. In social networks, genres are accumulations of small flexible formats that emerge, develop and alternate. When someone starts a trend, such as crying in front of the camera because of the end of the story, constructing a judgment of the book's content in a one-minute "burst" – both examples of existing formats in videos in social networks – the others follow. The most popular creators are often inventors followed by less subscribed or followed creators.

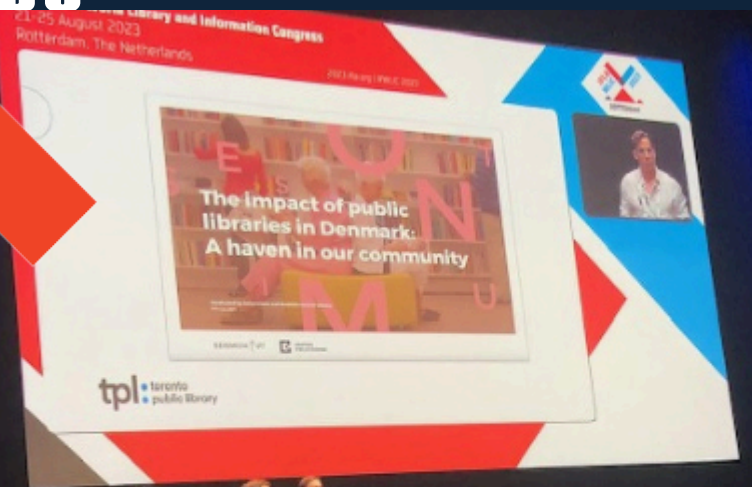
Reviewing can also be combined with larger categories of expression. For example, it is rather common in the sphere of ASMRtists to review books or other cultural products by whispering or speaking in a very soft voice, tapping book covers or making other kinds of relaxing noises with the help of the physical features of books. ASMR, derived from the concept of "auditive sensory meridian response," is a video genre where creators make relaxing videos based on the effects of soft sounds. In these types of videos, the production of a relaxing audioscape with "tingles" that are moments of pleasure in the listeners' brain, may be the primary purpose, but ASMR review videos may also contribute to increased interest in several books or literature.

The bookish online communities not only produce formats and ways of expression of their own based on the affordances available on the platforms, but also produce bestsellers and are able to affect book sales and borrowing rates at libraries. Popularity of a book within a bookish community may also produce platform-derivative bestsellers, as authors write books in interaction with the communities. The popularity of Colleen Hoover, an author who experienced a surge of popularity with her young adult fiction because of BookTok, is one compelling example.

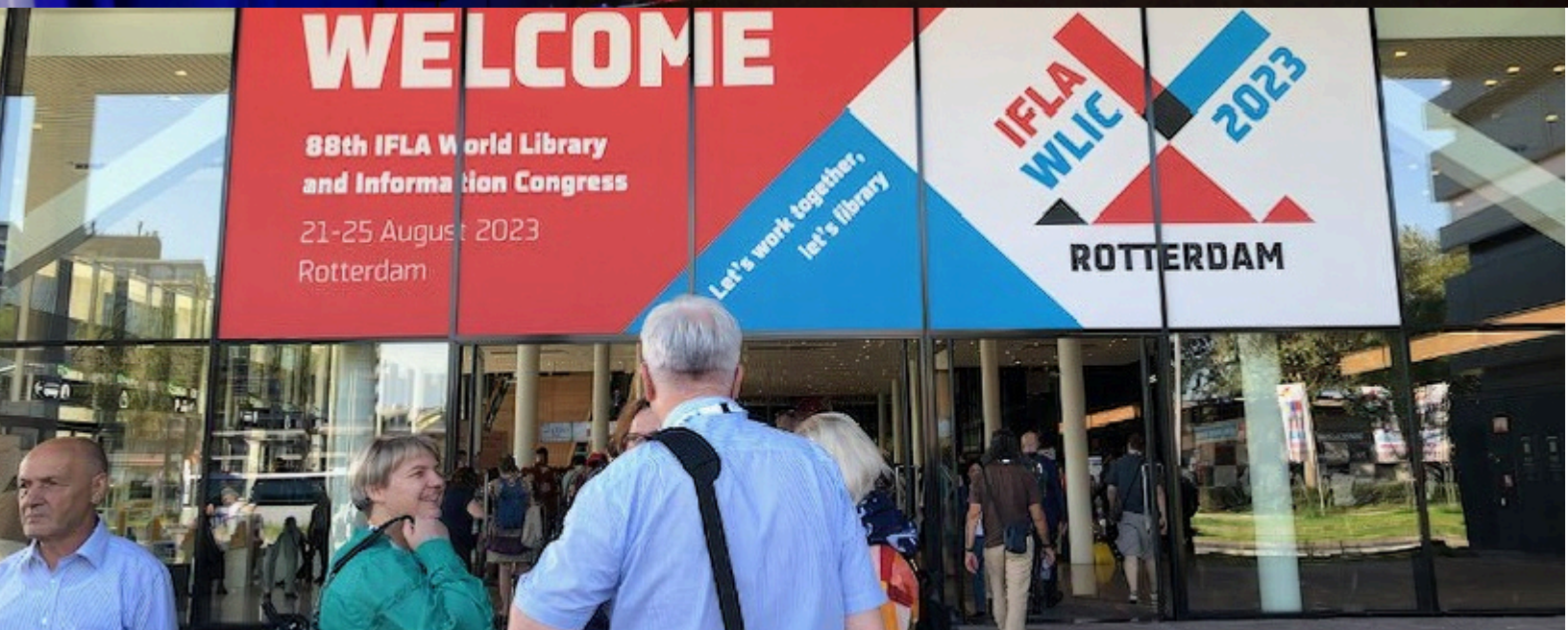
It is thus necessary to understand how genres work at digital platforms, in particular those of the "free" multipurpose social media such as Instagram, YouTube and TikTok where there are no predefined templates for reviewing but individuals are free to adjust, repurpose and re-invent this format. After that, we can curiously take a look at how the genre continues to live its life beyond its institutionalized forms – in the hands of future generations of readers and authors.

The author is co-director of Nordicom, a center for Nordic media research and an associate professor in journalism at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.





Panel discussions



Poster presentations



Trends. Pictured here is a Generative AI Poetry Machine.

