

Guest Editorial Preface

Special Issue on Transforming Libraries in China Through Innovative User-Centered Services (PART 1): The Innovative Service Practice of Chinese Libraries in the 21st Century

Lian Ruan, Executive Director of Chinese American Librarians Association, Director/Head Librarian of Illinois Fire Service Institute, Illinois Fire Service Institute, Champaign, USA

Xingye Du, Managing Director of Library and Information Service, National Science Library, Beijing, China

Since the 21st century, libraries in China have ushered in an era of prosperity. With the construction of new libraries, rebuilding of old facilities and upgrading of services, libraries have gradually become the cultural center of cities, and the learning and research center of universities. At the same time, Chinese libraries have also been integrating with the global library ecosystem (cause), and arousing attention from international counterparts. In 2006, Mandarin was specified as one of the seven official languages of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). In 2017, Professor Huanwen Cheng, from China, was selected as a member of the governing board of IFLA, which would greatly enhance the communication and cooperation between Chinese libraries and libraries in many other countries. On March 1, 2017, the law on protection of public cultural services was enforced in China; this is the first national law related to public cultural services and public libraries and will definitely provide legal insurance for future library development in China.

Behind the accomplishments, however, challenges in the digital age still face libraries in China. Whether it is a public library, university library or special library, striving for innovating services and keeping readers are common concerns. On one hand, the community of Chinese libraries are promoting digital reading. On the other hand, they are transforming their traditional services and offering more in-depth and competitive services. They convert underlying needs into tangible requirements and make an effort to meet these requirements. In this way libraries in China have comprehensively raised their capability to support teaching, research, management, and cultural and social development. Take the Library of Peking University for example; the staff there takes advantage of the abundant resources of the library and carry out projects like trend analysis of hot research areas, competitiveness analysis of patents, analysis of subject competitiveness, etc. The National Library of China is offering novel reference and consulting services, and Shanghai Library is providing data opening and sharing services.

Chinese libraries are continuously expanding the scope of service and initiating featured services. Due to the unbalanced development between cities and remote rural areas in China, library services have seldom reached those who reside in the underdeveloped countryside. Libraries are now trying to solve the following problems: how to deliver services to rural areas and how to provide equal services to urban migrants with low-literacy. Many public libraries have made rapid progress in tailoring services for special (disadvantaged) groups, including: the distinctive service focusing

on special groups, advancing general welfare by means of mobile library of Pudong Library in Shanghai, the inclusive services targeting for rural migrant workers of Hangzhou Library, the social cooperative services of Tongwei County Library, just to name a few. Compared with public libraries, the innovation of university libraries is mainly demonstrated by offering teachers and students with characteristic services: the in-depth cultural services catered to teachers and students at Library of Wuhan University, the multi-dimensional reading service at Library of Tongji University, and ‘Maker-oriented’ services at Library of Shenyang Normal University. These types of endeavors have positive impact on the entire society.

In order to build a bridge for the Sino-US library communication, disseminate the innovative service experiences of Chinese libraries to the world stage and make international counterparts know more about Chinese libraries, we have organized the special issue: *Transforming Libraries in China through Innovative User-Centered Services*. This issue introduces renowned experts in library research in China (most of them are board members of the professional committee of customer research and service of the Library Association of China) and libraries that are making contributions in developing innovative and featured services. These libraries include: the National Library of China, the Library of Peking University, the Library of Tsinghua University, the Shanghai Library, the Pudong Library, the Library of Tongji University, the Library of Wuhan University, the Library of Shenyang University, the Library of Gansu Province and so on. We believe that the case studies in this issue will be informative and illuminating for library communities world-wide.

Considering the length limitation, this special issue has been divided into two parts to publish. This is the first part. The content of part 1 are as follows:

- Junling Zhao, Wenxian Ge. Survey of Reading Promotion of Public Libraries in China;
- Shuqing Chu, Shumin Tu, Nuo Wang. Information Equity and Cultural Sharing: The service for migrant workers in Hangzhou Public Library;
- Huiyan Tang, Yitao Hu, Suoling Zhu, et al. Two case studies of topic-related multidimensional reading services in China;
- Lihua Wang, Fei Yang. Reading Promoters’ Training: New Service of Public Library A Case Study of Pudong Library of China;
- Xincui Wang, Xin Xie. Research on the Uniqueness and Characteristic Development of University Library Cultural Services: Practices at Wuhan University Library;
- Xiaowen Wang, Tianni Wang. Innovative Practice and Development Thinking of Space Re-design in the Liaoning Provincial Library.

We are expecting this issue will facilitate the promotion of the innovative services of Chinese libraries and stimulate closer communication and cooperation between libraries in China and other countries all around the world.

Lian Ruan
Xingye Du
Guest Editors
IJLIS