Preface

This book is a volume of case studies and academic papers on Ellen Tise’s Presidential theme for 2009–2011 – *Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge (A2K)*. It provides insights into current and prospective practices in providing access to knowledge in libraries and the use of technological devices to assist A2K. The book also provides relevant theoretical frameworks, latest empirical research findings, and practitioners’ best practices in the subject. The different chapters are a product of a call for papers published on IFLA’s website. It received an excellent reply from potential authors worldwide in 2009. After selecting of the abstracts that complemented the theme and scope of the book, authors were asked to write full chapters in 2010. The submitted chapters were further screened and feedback was provided to the authors for improvements. The end result is a monograph with thirteen chapters grouped in four sub-themes: User-Oriented A2K Actions; Libraries and Lifelong Learning; Libraries as Space and Place in A2K; and Other A2K Theme Approaches. All papers are in English. However, the mother tongues of the authors represent a mosaic of nine languages and twelve countries.

A foreword written by Jānis Kārklīņš, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO’s Communication and Information Division and an introductory chapter written by Ellen Tise follow the usual book preliminaries. The body of the monograph is grouped according to the following subthemes:

**User-Oriented A2K Actions**

Four chapters are included under this subheading, beginning with the contribution by Sverrisdóttir and Pórarinsdóttir, who focus on opening access to electronic databases and e-journals via a countrywide portal. A significant issue and a break-away from common practice is the sharing of resources among all types of libraries – such a process truly addresses the issue of open access – open access to all. As much as libraries strive to open access to material, it is the authors of research material that need to be receptive to publishing in open access forums. Koycheva, on the other hand, has the public library approach of transforming the library profession and the management styles in place. Politics of difference and access for all are also the trends reviewed and compared. The chapter by Narborough, Stubbings and Walton engages in discussion on exploiting contemporary technology in delivering information in forums that students relate to the most. The chapter by Winter and Sandy investigates, ad-
ditionally, this receptiveness against the backdrop of libraries exploring options for managing, preserving and disseminating digital assets.

Libraries and Lifelong Learning

The first two chapters in this section by Hallik and Lembinen and that by Roy, Hogan and Lilley investigate the issue of inclusivity. They engage in discourse on the issue of native language material being available globally. Roy, Hogan and Lilley emphasize the dual role of indigenous peoples’ cultural rights for access to knowledge: the need for support of indigenous cultural production and the vital importance of indigenous peoples’ self-determination of access to cultural knowledge. These cultural rights are founded in indigenous worldview and codified in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Libraries, librarians and other information providers are encouraged to take a stance to place access to knowledge and information high on their agendas. Opening access to knowledge and information comes with other responsibilities such as delivering well structured information literacy programs which will guide users in identifying trusted and authentic information and using that information ethically. Contemporary technology also influences the spaces libraries use in delivering or making available information. There is a paradigm shift away from libraries as a warehouse of information to libraries as a social space that facilitates rigorous engagement in the production of new knowledge and information. The last chapter of this part, by Torras i Calvo, proposes a model for information literacy education, a basic role that libraries need to assume to foster library quality demand.

Libraries as Space and Place in A2K

The initial chapter by Closet-Crane is devoted to the study of the discourse on academic library planning and design developed in seminal texts from the professional literature with the aim to explore the discursive construction of the academic library as learning place. Lehto, Toivonen and Iivonen, on the other hand study university library facilities with regard to the satisfaction and usage of customers, while Sequeiros and Grünig engage in the discussion of the changing role of the library and the concomitant use of library space to drive access to knowledge and information. The physical design of a library can certainly inhibit or foster its use, therefore the architectural design must aim to attract and retain users in their search of access to knowledge.
Other A2K Theme Approaches

The contribution by Barber, Pisano, Romagnoli, Parsiale, de Pedro, Gregui and Blanco present a study of Web OPACs in academic, special, public and national libraries in Latin America to study their management system and establish the differences between Integrated Library Systems (ILS) and Database Management Systems (DBMS). As indicated earlier, the fundamental purpose of open access, from the perspective of the library, is to remove barriers that hinder access to knowledge and information. It is proposed that the removal of such barriers will contribute to the growth of society and knowledge economies. Therefore, open access can be nothing less than a public good. The chapter by Gómez and Bongiovani discusses how open access can restore the condition of knowledge as a global public good. In ensuring open access is a public good there has to be a commitment to be all inclusive, that is, ensuring minority communities and indigenous populations are part of the knowledge and information main stream. In the last chapter of the book, Wong acknowledges the importance of ICT in the learning environment as a way to approach younger generations, promoting the use of videos as a tool through the recently created HKBUtube, a local online video site.