

Introduction

There are 196 countries in the world in 2012¹ and all of them have schools, colleges, and universities to educate their children. Many countries in the western world and in developing nations have excellent educational institutions with good libraries to support their academic programs. There are many excellent public and special libraries also in some western and other nations. On the other hand, many developing nations are behind in their efforts to improve libraries and introduce technology in their libraries. Recession and bad economic conditions since 2008 have made a deep impact on the progress of libraries all over the world but poor developing countries have suffered more than developed nations. They are struggling to catch up to serve the needs of their population in this information age of the twenty first century. There are many reasons for the slow progress of libraries – including wars and uprisings – in countries of Africa, Asia and Middle East; this can be seen in countries such as Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Rwanda, Somalia, Syria and other nations. A few developing countries including Argentina, Brazil, China and India have made efforts to improve their libraries and have introduced technology because they want to make progress and improve literacy rate in their countries.

Volume 2 of *Libraries in the Early 21st Century: An International Perspective* includes chapters from many countries of all continents. Authors have discussed the progress made by their libraries including introduction of technology in the information age for the benefit of their children, students, scholars and other citizens. They have also discussed the progress their libraries will make during the next fifteen years. It will help library leaders and political leaders of all nations to discuss the ways to bring equality of access to information in all nations in the twenty first century.

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It is a comprehensive book with first hand and up-to-date information on libraries of many countries from all continents. It will help students and faculty

1 “The Number of Countries in the World.” About.com.geography. <http://geography.about.com/cs/countries/a/numbercountries.htm>. Accessed April 24, 2012.