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ICADLA Programme and other introductory documents

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The objectives, strategies and topics and presentations for the first ICADLA Conference were conceptualised, realized and convened by Abraham Azubuike, Chief Librarian of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Addis Ababa, Felix Ubogu, University Librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and Michele Pickover, Curator of Historical Papers and Manuscripts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Together they had the responsibility of identifying and selecting speakers and presentations from an African and international community, and developing the conference programme. More details about ICADLA-1 are given in their Preface.

It has been an exciting challenge to copy-edit the papers and presentations from ICADLA-1. In deciding that these papers should be collated as Proceedings and made available on the web and as a CD, the convenors have placed a key set of documents on the all too sparsely populated map of African library and archives digitized information and knowledge leadership in the first decade of the 21st century.

The overriding policy in editing these papers has been to retain as much as possible the original "voices" of the contributors, almost all of whom have presented and written in English although this is not the first language of most contributors. As a result, in the evocative words of a Languages Department poster at my university some years ago, these papers and presentations richly "speak in many Englishes". And as John Grimond points out in *The Economist style guide*, "If the prose of our Tokyo correspondent is indistinguishable from the prose of our Nairobi correspondent, readers will feel they are being robbed of variety ... so long as the prose is good, editors should exercise suitable self-restraint." [1] In editing ICADLA-1 I found myself engaging with the English of many African countries as well as that of Arabic, European and Indian presenters. It has indeed been a rich international professional journey and I have tried to do justice to all.

Some papers clearly reflect a "speaking" script for presentation; some are personal but more formal accounts of projects and points of view; others again are formal referenced papers. Because the original texts were not specifically peer-reviewed for content and style, the papers here have not been edited retrospectively as if they were submissions to a scholarly journal or formal academic conference proceedings. In addition, no reference style was originally prescribed, so papers contain references and citations in many different formats, or none, whether in the text or as endnotes, and these variations of style have largely been retained.

All presenters submitted electronic texts. They reflect "spellcheck" suggestions, some grammatical structures and punctuation. These are predominantly but not always in US English; as UK English is the South African standard, spelling was editorially modified to align it with current accepted practice and spelling conventions. Some of the most challenging (and misunderstood) variations in usage are words that end in "ise/ize" and compound words including hyphenated words. The 2001 *New Oxford Dictionary of English* [2], and occasionally the older *Chambers English Dictionary*[3] were used as spelling and usage

[1] Grimond, John (2010). "A note on editing", in *The Economist style guide,* 10th ed., London, Profile Books, p.5

[2] *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (2001), edited by Judy Pearsall. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

[3] *Chambers English Dictionary* (1990). Edinburgh, Chambers.

authorities, supplemented by *The Economist style guide*[4] and Robert Allen's *Common errors and problems in English*.[5] When faced with a choice between two contrasting authority sources and a third individual style, I have in some places made decisions to prefer a particular style or construction even when it is not necessarily supported by the sources referred to above. I apologise for any inconsistencies that may inadvertently remain.

I have edited as lightly as possible, consistent with incorporating accepted English spelling, punctuation, grammar, expression and stylistic practices. The record of *what* the contributors said has seemed to me more important than making detailed amendments to *how* they said it. I hope therefore that each presenter will find his/her "voice" recognisable, though the text may reflect editorial changes in the interests of accuracy, clarity and smooth reading.

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I should like to express particular thanks to my colleague Michele Pickover for technically ensuring as far as she possibly could that the conference material and presentations were made available for collation into the ICADLA-1 Proceedings. The very few presentations that are not included were not available despite repeated efforts to obtain them.

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[4] *The Economist style guide,* 10th edition. London, Profile Books.
[5] Allen, Robert (2008). *Common errors and problems in English.* London, Penguin Books.