

2003 Paris Clearing House Workshop
25 – 27 June 2003
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The 2003 Clearing House workshop organized by DIT was an important opportunity to update colleagues working in documentation centres on **challenges, needs and services** of documentation centres. It fulfilled one of the primary needs expressed by participants to build a community of information specialists in order to be more efficient in services rendered.

The workshop was also a good opportunity to underline the **diverse facets of information management in UNESCO**, especially in view of the increasing use of IT in disseminating information. Update on recent developments in various fields, i.e. records management and archiving, website development and the UNESCO portal project reminded colleagues of the multi-facet nature of their profession. In this regard several training needs were voiced. Field office staff also expressed their willingness to participate in headquarter initiatives, i.e. facilitating the construction of websites for National Commissions.

Furthermore the workshop provided a good opportunity to follow-up with field office colleagues on **pending issues**, regarding website development and records management to name only a few issues.

Documentation Centres are not just an information database, but also a social space for getting to know the organization and its activities. The field office documentation centres increase thus the visibility of the organization on a local level.

Documentalists have important responsibilities in presenting the image of the organization but also facilitating access to information. These tasks are facilitated by information technology, but do not replace personnel in solving information requests. Documentalists should become better users of IT in order to render even more efficient services.

Today documentation centres have to consider questions on the **future of documentation centres** in terms of centralized or decentralized units, new technology and expectations of new audiences in accessing “new” information.

The following **needs** were expressed in view of the changing environment of documentation centres:

- The need to **community building** among the documentalists professionals in UNESCO in order to share experiences and new information;
- Analyses of **users and user needs**;
- **Specialized training** on information sources in the organization (clearing house workshop), communication skills and techniques to scan websites;
- **Support from Directors** in providing the necessary support and infrastructure;
- Address high distribution cost through the **better use of CD-ROMs** and using field office documentation centres as privileged access points.