

FUNCTIONS OF KEEPING (STORING) INFORMATION IN THE LIBRARIES IN THE ERA OF THE INFORMATION WORLD

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Abstract: In the era of connecting the libraries into networks and the ever-increasing presence of the Internet in all spheres of communication, the importance of the electronic sources of information used by the libraries increased. The network enhancements also changed the way of communication that will result in significant changes of the library structures with the goal to provide better organization of the information and access to them. The networks and the shared use of the sources is going to increase the potential of the libraries largely to meet the needs of the users, which are always greater than the capacities of the library. For this purpose, the information and communication technology with the new ways of organization and exploitation of the network needs to be put into function of increment of their potentials. The sources of information of the libraries, in the narrow sense, can be treated as material owned by the libraries (internet sources) together with possibilities for access to information outside the libraries (external sources) to which the libraries provide access. The functions of keeping (storing) information and providing access to information basically represent the essence of the functioning of the libraries throughout their existence. As a result of the great number of changes in the sphere of the technological areas in the last years, there are significant changes not only in the domain of the sources of information, but there are also structural and functional changes in the libraries. The libraries must completely meet the challenges of the new era of the information world – they completely have to be in function of the users who seek quality knowledge, information and creative experience.

Keywords: libraries, electronic sources, information, users.

Introduction

Today, it is popular to say that we live in an “information society”. It is a society and time in which all people are familiar with the practical importance of information for solving problems, making conclusions and generally about life and everyday living.

The flow of information in a society is an immensely diverse and complex phenomenon, which becomes more operational when understood.

The science of information (information science) has Anglo-Saxon origin and it emerged from the science of libraries. As a subject of research it has the information delivered by these organizations, regardless if they are public, university or school libraries, spatial libraries or documentation centers. Public reading and the reading of books is material of the first researches in this sphere.

After this, the information (subject of research of the science for information) becomes important and topical for other sciences, techniques, industries and countries. Because of this, the development of information becomes even more dynamic. It becomes especially topical with the emerging of the information technologies and the increased need for information in all spheres of human and social life.

The circle of users of information increases daily and rapidly, thus creating the base of the information foundations, on which the science of information is currently established.

Information is recorded knowledge (registration) in written (hard-copy or digital), oral or audio-visual form of a medium. The appearance of information corresponds with its two main characteristics: the explosion of the quantity of information and the implosion of the time needed to communicate it.

In this context, we may conclude that the science of information is a conscientious activity, organized by people, with clearly defined origin, subject, tasks and objectives of research, specifically developed methodology of scientific research and clearly defined content and practitioners (experts), easy for identification.

It has relatively new foundations (they correspond with the establishment of the first scientific association in the USA, American Society for information Sciences – ASIS). Although, this science is only half a century old, it developed quite rapidly – it has a definition of what it researches, methods, a number of basic problems, fundamental laws and own history – characteristics of its maturity.

The content of the information science, which is inter-disciplinary, includes scientific information from the domains of mathematics and physics, the social and the humanistic sciences.

The information science and the storing of information in the modern libraries

Librarianship is an interdisciplinary science dealing with the study of books (i.e. the library fund and its users).

The main objective of librarianship is to provide as many sources of information as possible, to process them and put them into function, i.e. to make them available to the users of the library.

The internet has at its disposal a lot of information needed to the users. However, these data in the global database are not always trustworthy and supported. Because of this, the role of the librarians is very important, i.e. their training, on the grounds of which, they need to exhaust and at the same time select the information required by the user.

The development of the modern libraries was conditioned by the very rapid development of modern science, which implies increment of the research activities, i.e. it conditions increment of information and library material in the libraries.

The network improvements changed the way of communication, which will result in important changes in the traditional library structures, with the goal to provide better organization of information and improved access.¹

In recent years, as a result of the increased number of changes in the sphere of technology, important changes in the domain of the sources of information manifested. Today, we can rightly conclude that there are significant structural and functional changes in the composition of the sources of information of the libraries – in the Internet, but even more so in the area of the external sources. “If we use terms such as: electronic, on-line, Internet, analogous, digital, structural or non-structural, we can carry out an adequate classification and make comparative analysis of the changes according to this classification”.²

This relatively fast growth inevitably initiated the changes of the libraries. It is no longer enough for these institutions to deal only with the enrichment of the library funds and their processing. The libraries received the following new functions:

- informative,
- documentary,
- communicative,
- searching and access to information.

The libraries have a task to select information according to the needs of the new profiles of users, and this implies completely new organization of the libraries in terms of coordination and use of the electronic databases and the traditional instruments (catalogues) of the libraries.

¹ See more: Greth, S.D. (1996). The Electronic Library: Douching Toward the Future or creating a New Information Environment. – Follett lecture series.

² Oostir, B. (2002). Koriscenje izvora informacija, [Oostir, B. (2002) Using the information sources, scientific paper presented at the Eight Ensemble of the Association of the Libraries of the Universities in Serbia, held on 26 September, 2002 in Belgrade]

A priority and crucial objective of the libraries is to inform the library users that the library information has great power, especially the verified information.

The libraries, as information services, are completely dedicated to providing their users with relevant information sources and services, without any kind of limitation or form of censorship. They provide equal access to their material and information sources of all kinds, which are at their disposal³, to all users. According to the declaration of IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), the libraries and the information services must guarantee privacy to the users in terms of the documents they use, borrow or give, regardless whether they search or receive information.

The philosophy of the library and the profession – librarian is based on the first principle for providing services to the users. An important element in the development of relationships between the librarians and the users is the process of communication. It implies establishing a personal relationship between the librarian and the user. The librarian is the one who needs to use all skills and techniques in order to establish an adequate and friendly relationship with the user. In fact, this is what the user expects from the information clerk.

The successfully established communication between the librarian and the user always results in successful and complete realization of the primary objective of the library.

Of course, the educational element of the users should be incorporated in the communication. The modern development of science, culture and especially of technology inevitably imposes the need for education of the library users.⁴

The modernization of the library processes renders the process of searching and finding information from the database easier. However, the user needs to be sufficiently trained in terms of where and how to find the needed information.

The training of the library users should start at the earliest age. The children in primary school, i.e. in their school library should acquire the basic library and information literacy and the skill for “communication” with the basic technical tools. The libraries, especially the school libraries need to provide the basic information literacy to the users, thus enabling them an unobstructed use of the sources of information in the library. The saying of Simmel “The person who knows how to find what he does not know is an educated person” best suits this trend of library development.

³ Lancaster, F.W. (1997). ArtificialIntelligenceandExpertSystem Technologies: Prospects:Bo: Libraries for the New Millenium: ImplicationsforManagers. London; Library Association publishing, p. 19-37.

⁴ Brofi, P.(2000) Biblioteke u dvadesetprvomveku:Beograd; CLIO, str 131 [Brofi, P. (2000) The Libraries in the Twenty-first Century: Belgrade; CLIO, p. 131]

The librarian work and the trends for motivation of the users of information

In communication there always are influences and complementation between the needs of the users (on one hand) and the services of the libraries (on the other hand). The more the libraries are motivated to enrich the type and quality of services that they offer, the greater the motivation of the users to have new and modern services, and this leads to increased motivation of the libraries to modernize their services, all with the goal to meet the needs of their users.

The motivation for visiting the library is different for each user, and it is expressed in a different degree.

- Borrowing a book, using the reading-room, searching information in the electronic database, searching information in the traditional information instruments (the library catalogues), using the library fund for the preparation of a diploma work, a master thesis, a research project, preparation for a course, etc.

From all this, we can conclude that the users visit the library because they are motivated by different needs, and thus we need to continuously improve and educate the library staff, all with the goal to be able to accept and answer to the challenges and meet the new needs of the users of the library services.

Regarding the motivation of the users, there have been many researches in several countries, especially the motivation of the students who are users of the funds, i.e. all of the information sources of the school libraries.

A research was carried out in Croatia, the results of which are published in “Korišćenješkolskihbibliotekakao faktor uspešnostiučenika” (2008) by the authors ZheljkoVuckovich and Nada Todorov. A survey paper administered to the students was used as an instrument in this research. This research led them to the conclusion that the libraries are most commonly used for borrowing school readers, and rarely for realization of other instructional content.

In the school library in the primary school “Ivana KukuljevichSakcinskog” in Ivanec in 2008, a research was also carried out on the topic “The reading culture of the students in the higher grades of primary school”. As an instrument of research they used a questionnaire with 28 questions. The research led to a conclusion that the students want to read and that some of them consider it to be an obligation. When the students were reading, it was important for them to have fun and learn something new. They felt resistance when they were reading because of an obligation.

One research of this kind was carried out in the Republic of Macedonia in 2014 in the project “The condition of the school libraries in the city Skopje and their influence on the educational process”. The project was carried out by the Faculty of Pedagogy “St. KlimentOhridski” – Skopje.

In this project, without an exception, all 11 municipalities of the city Skopje were involved. The total number of schools was 89.

From the total number of analyzed schools (89), most of them, to be more exact 68 or 76.4% belong to the category primary schools, whereas 21 in the category of high schools, or 23.6%.

The questionnaire used for the research had a question concerning the degree of motivation of the students to use all of the library information at the disposal of the library.

The question, which stated: “Based on your knowledge, please answer whether the motivation of the users is small, satisfactory or great”, is closely related to the type of education of the librarian. The more adequate the education of the librarian, the greater themotivation of the students to use the library funds of the schools libraries.

Low motivation of the users is chosen as an answer by the librarians in 11 analyzed school libraries (or 12.4%). By making a comparative analysis we can confirm that the results are almost identical at all levels, with the existence of small, statistically insignificant differences.

Satisfactory motivation of the users is the answer that was opted for in 55 analyzed schools (61.8%), which is the dominant value in the analyses that were important for the answers of the previous question, as well. Only 16 schools (18%) are characterized by a high degree of motivation for using the literary fund of the school libraries.

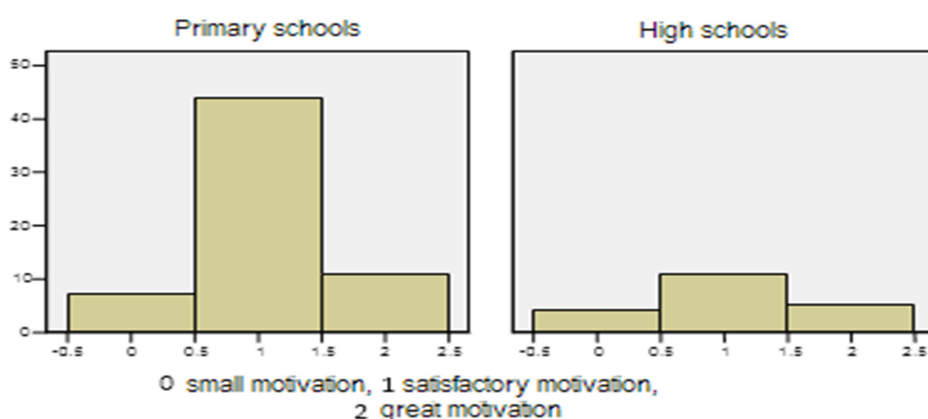


Diagram 1. The frequency of schools according to the assessment of the librarian for the motivation of the users.

Instead of an answer and an analysis of these two questions, without a doubt, we can conclude that if the education of the librarian is not adequate, the motivation of the students (adequately) for using the literary fund is lower, and vice versa.

The librarians, i.e. the information clerks who have adequate education or who have completed courses for library work in which they partially acquired the professional and personal competencies that are necessary for a librarian in order to successfully carry out the librarian work, have better results in terms of the increment of the motivation of the students to search and use information provided by the library.

The condition presented through the answers of these two mutually related questions gives the real image, which is totally unacceptable and under all European standards and educational tendencies and trends. Instead of a conclusion, we are going to stress that we need urgent and necessary interventions in the future in order to completely transform this “bad image” which is not uncharacteristic for the modern countries.

Conclusion

In the analysis of the information cycle we can discover three revolutionary shifts that determine three times in the cycle: time of production of information, time of communication of information and time of using information. In fact, we are dealing with three scientific revolutions, which took place or are currently happening. With them, three new scientific paradigms came to existence. The paradigm of collective working, the paradigm of flow of information and the paradigm of the user (orientation of the user). The fourth revolution is the technological one, which started in the 60s of the previous century, and takes place continuously to this very day, without stopping: it is a revolution that inevitably replaced the hard-copy medium of information with the electronic one, i.e. the electronic media. The fourth paradigm, among other things, has significant influence of the previous three processes that replaced the old scientific paradigms.

In this context, it is important to stress that the second paradigm that referred to the storing of information was replaced by a new paradigm – the flow of information. In this direction, the work of the modern libraries needs to be transformed, from a place for storing information into centers for flow of information. Not any kind of flow of information, but fast, quality and efficient flow of new waves of information, which need to arrive to their users all over the planet.

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