Повышение эффективности и стандартов библиотек вузов в соответствии с нововведениями в образовании

Improving Efficiency and Standards of the Academic Libraries According to Educational Innovations

Підвищення ефективності та стандартів вищих навчальних закладів відповідно до нововведень в освіту

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Не подлежит обсуждению то, что сегодня любое упоминание образования и реформ образования автоматически подразумевает концепцию пожизненного образования. В связи с различными изменениями нам пришлось осознать совершенно новые перспективы в развитии образования, бизнеса и управления. Эта новая ситуация изменяет и переопределяет роль библиотек и библиотекаря в системе образования.

Анализируя организацию и деятельность библиотек на факультете философии Университета Загреба, авторы доклада пытаются оценить настолько библиотеки вузов и библиотекарии Хорватии могут поддержать недавние изменения в системе образования и какие усилия предпринимаются для повышения их эффективности и общих стандартов. Авторы отмечают, что дополнительное пространство и соответствующее обучение библиотекарей может значительно повысить мотивацию к повышению качества и эффективности библиотек для соответствия современным нововведениям в образовании.

It is beyond dispute that today any relevant mention of education and educational reforms automatically includes the concept of lifelong learning.

Due to various changes we have to get a brand new perspective on the situation in education, business, and management.

This innovative learning environment changes and redefines the role both of the library and the librarian in the context of educational system. Analysing the organization and the activities of the libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb the authors of the paper try to establish how well the academic libraries and librarians in Croatia can support recent changes in education and what efforts are being made for the improvement of their efficiency and general standards. Primarily the authors will indicate that providing some extra space for the libraries and ensuring adequate training for the librarians can strongly stimulate the improvement in the efficiency and quality of the libraries so they would conform to the contemporary educational innovations.

Поза сумнівом, що сьогодні, згадуючи про освіту та освітню реформу, автоматично згадуємо концепцію самоосвіти протягом всього життя.

У зв'язку з різними змінами, ми усвідомили абсолютно нові перспективи в розвитку освіти, бізнесу та управління.

Така ситуація змінює та потребує перегляду ролі бібліотеки та бібліотекаря в системі освіти. Аналізуючи організацію та діяльність бібліотек факультету філософії Університету Загреба, автори доповіді намагаються визначити, наскільки бібліотеки вищих навчальних закладів та бібліотекарі Хорватії здатні підтримувати нещодавні зміни в системі освіти та які зусилля докладають для підвищення їхньої ефективності та загальних стандартів.

Автори зазначають, що додатковий простір та відповідна освіта бібліотекарів здатні значно посиливти мотивацію до підвищення якості та ефективності діяльності бібліотек для відповідності сучасним нововведенням в освіті.

Introduction

Today modern societies are changing radically. These changes have been so far-reaching that the society as a whole evidently underwent a tremendous transformation as well. There is hardly any sector of society that hasn’t been affected by the transition from one territorial, local, and industrial system into a global, post-industrial, and information community. The progress of computerization, the growing impor-
tance of intellectual capital in the working sector opens up the question of the new training necessary for working in these changed conditions. According to some expert estimates modern progress of our society requires retraining of the 75% of the traditional labour force.

Education is similarly going through constant changes in an effort to overcome the inertia of the university structures. Information technologies have proved to be an excellent base for introducing and implementing reforms and innovations in all aspects of education.

Knowledge as the intellectual capital has become the basis for the progress of the modern society. Formerly the distribution and accumulation of knowledge, the most important phases of knowledge management, were traditionally associated with school institutions and traditionally they weren’t regarded as the part of the working process, but as the stages that should have preceded the working process. Permanent education, which means organization of the distribution and accumulation of knowledge during the working process as well, requires innovative social and technological solutions for the process of education itself. The need for this permanent education, so that constant learning can be an integral part of the working process, involves not only those who learn in this process, but also those who are supposed to adjust the educational system to meet the new requirements — educators, teaching staff.

The rapid progress of science along with sustained accumulation of new information causes knowledge to become out-dated very quickly, which in terms of education means quick out-dating of literature, textbooks, teaching materials, that is, of educational materials in general.

Therefore, due to this new knowledge, most of the textbooks as well as other educational materials become obsolete so that it is necessary either to draft entirely new materials or at least to up date the content of the existing ones. The University of Zagreb is a complex structure both in terms of the number of its employees (more than 4000 members of the teaching and professional staff) as well as in terms of the number of its students (more than 60 000). According to its present organization, the University is functioning as quite a loose conglomerate of several higher education institutions that have almost full legal autonomy (more than 30 faculties and academies). The University is scattered on several locations in the city and complex interventions in construction and traffic would be required to transform it into a physical entity that would consist of several recognizable polycentric units, i.e., campuses. In this respect the University of Zagreb is no exception to the majority of the traditional European universities. In the context of extensive reforms that are presently under way, the University is being structured in terms of different fields according to the well-known classification that includes biomedical, bio technical, technical, social, humanistic (liberal-arts), natural-science scientific and artistic fields.

Following the same principles the model of university structuring at three levels is being developed. A similar project of the Croatian Scientific Information Network includes the department libraries of the University, while the University Library functions as a separate and independent university unit.

Information technologies have proved to be a suitable groundwork for the academic reforms, but their full application in teaching requires adequately trained staff as well as automated libraries. Libraries, that is, librarians are expected to efficiently support the teaching processes, especially in terms of being able to competently acquaint potential users with all the sources of information and knowledge and in terms of instructing users to be able to evaluate on their own both the sources and the given information. Croatian experience indicates that academic libraries have to take the leading role in redefining the model of the library as the centre of learning sources and aids and libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy are especially aware of that. Moreover, this is specifically considered to be the task of the Faculty of Philosophy since the great majority of teachers and professors-to-be are getting their education at this particular faculty. Network infrastructure has been established and according to that over the last five years all departments and libraries have been computerized and provided with access to Internet.

**Present condition of the libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb**

There are 18 active department libraries and the Central Reading-room at the Faculty. The libraries’ staff consists of 26 employees — all of them are graduated librarians, but they have also specialized in one particular subject. The Faculty of Philosophy has closely monitored the activities of its libraries over the years within the framework of regular annual research carried out by the state’s Central Bureau of Statistics. There were also some surveys organized by the Library Board, University Library Board, by the Chair of librarianship and by The Development Service at the National and University Library.
ough analysis was carried out within the project entitled Croatian Scientific Information Network (2003) and here we are going to use some of the data gathered during this project (Table 1).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Periodicals</th>
<th>Copies</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>360,188</strong></td>
<td><strong>467,254</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,877</strong></td>
<td><strong>138,865</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
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</table>

**Table 1. Libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy**

Libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb are providing their services in spite of considerable difficulties and without the possibility to implement the *Standards for the university libraries in the Republic of Croatia* (1990).

- only 26 employees are providing for the libraries’ holdings that include approximately 600,000 subject items and with only a few undergraduate assistants they are attending to some 7,000 users operating at some 1,300 square metres of space
- the growing number of students and academic courses is not supported by adequate funding necessary for providing of the new materials, by the corresponding rise in the number of members of the library staff, and finally by the required spatial extensions
- materials are not made easily accessible or ready for use
- there isn’t enough adequate working space and especially the space for users that would be equipped with the necessary IT
- there are no required conditions for making qualified periodic selections of the materials
- the works of the scientific and teaching staff are not systematically compiled
- inter-library lending is not systematically organized
- there are many limitations to the organization of cultural activities, such as presentations of new editions, books, authors, organizing platforms, exhibitions, etc.

It is evident from the table that a very small number of employed librarians manages very large numbers of volumes and copies of various periodicals and journals.

Department libraries provide the following services:

- systematic compiling of collections
- expert processing of the materials — both formal as well as in terms of content
- making materials available for use and lending
- information and reference services as well as other organizational and profession-related activities
- adequate storing and preserving of the materials
- producing catalogues and computer databases, specialized bibliographies, and other information aids
- instructing users how to make use of the catalogues, databases, and other information aids
- mentoring students of the information sciences department
• exchanging libraries’ own publications with the publications of other institutions

• cooperation with other libraries and institutions

Since the libraries of the faculty have entered the project entitled Croatian Scientific Information Network (2001) which is sponsored and conducted by the Ministry of science and technology, there have been considerable improvements — the libraries have been equipped with modern IT, the materials have been put under systematic computer processing, and information about the computerized part of the collections are available at Web PAC. Alongside with all these innovations the libraries regularly perform and organize various shared activities: providing for the periodicals and journals, and for the materials from electronic libraries, making use of the on-line databases, organizing instruction for the users, employees, and associates, planning new collective activities, etc.

However, all this is not sufficient for the support of the contemporary learning environment where libraries are expected to be the educational centres with a professional who has been trained according to modern standards and who can easily adjust to any change or innovation and provide high-quality services.

**Library as the educational centre**

*Library as the educational centre* — should provide all the necessary conditions required for learning in terms of ensuring the basic infrastructure and support for all levels of academic education, self-education, and lifelong learning. This objective may be realized through:

• competent selection and organization of the library’s collections from all the disciplines and interdisciplinary courses that are taught and researched at the Faculty of Philosophy by using different types of media

• organization and arrangement of specialized collections (collections for the students with special needs, collections of master’s and doctoral theses, etc.)

• ensuring the necessary conditions for working and learning in studying- and reading-rooms, in classrooms intended either for individual or group work, electronic classrooms, etc.

• offering the possibility of using computers, microfiche reader, and other equipment and providing competent assistance in writing seminars, graduation theses, and other scientific and scholarly papers

• organization and realization of well-designed programmes (for example, developing computer literacy, self-education in foreign languages, distance learning, permanent education, including training of the members of the library staff and specialized programmes intended for specific target groups)

• close cooperation at all levels with the similar institutions

• consistent evaluation of the libraries’ collections, facilities, and services

• instructing users how to choose between various sources of information and adequately use them (providing guidance and adequate instruction enabling users to evaluate different the sources)

The libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb are taking part in the educational and scientific faculty activities. They are contributing to these activities by compiling and managing their collections, providing information aids and databases, and by organizing relevant library facilities and services. A qualitative analysis clearly indicates that this is not sufficient.

**How to improve the standards**

Today it is obvious that the value of the university largely depends on the quality of its libraries. The library is the principal and most significant part of the university. Its primary purpose is to enable learning and research, further accumulation of new knowledge and to pass it on to future generations. An important issue today is how well the libraries can perform these tasks and what are the necessary conditions for their fulfilment. The methods of selecting, acquiring, storing, and distributing information in an institution strongly influence the standards and the quality of its educational and research activities. The library has to take active role in this particular segment. The quality of university libraries is determined not just
according to the quantity of library holdings, but also according to the value of its holdings and the standards of its services.

Due to many changes and innovations — expansion of the higher education, the growing number of students and members of the teaching staff, advancing IT, increasing number of information available by electronic means, changes in attitudes according to which the so-called «classical sources» of information are no longer sufficient so that more and more information appears in the form that until recently couldn’t be found in libraries— libraries have to reorganize their development strategies in order to achieve higher standards, justify their existence and expectations of their users. Contemporary breakthroughs in education and new methods of working and learning (e-learning) must be reflected in the libraries’ programmes. The most significant changes involve scientific communication and its accompanying infrastructure. Virtual libraries, not physically limited by walls, together with electronic campuses are the most frequent concepts used to describe the libraries of the future. Today more importance is being placed on the virtual substance rather than the physical; more attention is given to services for individuals with special needs. More and more significance is attached to networking and to the development of the searching standards. The storing and preserving of materials is becoming electronic, digitization is replacing xeroxing. There is a considerable number of multimedia- and hypermedia- learning sources that a library should make available so it would adequately contribute to education. It is perfectly clear that in order to survive libraries should provide high-quality services and that means introducing innovations by means of electronic technology. The concept of gathering and storing of information is thus being replaced with the concept of making information available. Therefore in order to raise its standards the library should first of all make extensive use of electronics, both in terms of the equipment as well as in terms of processing its materials; it should also have a well-organized information service and the library itself should function as the central information service of the entire university. It goes without saying that meeting such standards requires adequately trained professionals.

They have to be skilled in providing user services, helping them to use the electronic sources.

On account of all the innovations in the process of education and changed requirements of the users caused by the introduction of new media, academic libraries of the Faculty of Philosophy are developing detailed plans for the future management of their holdings. However, they are encountering many obstacles and the most critical among them seems to be the task of spatial decentralization as well as the decentralization of staff. Resulting from this the faculty started the construction project that should provide some extra space for the faculty libraries so it would be easier to satisfy the conditions set before contemporary libraries.

Training librarians for changes

The Department of Information sciences that includes the library science studies as one of the information professional courses has similarly started a comprehensive reconstruction of its internal structure and educational programmes.

The modern information society has further strengthened the role of professionals involved in information organization, management and access, but at the same time has put higher demands on expertise and competences that are expected from information field specialists. These are important signposts in evaluating and rethinking the mission of information professionals’ education in the current curriculum development at Department of Information sciences.

The Department of Information sciences curriculum underwent significant change with the introduction of Internet technology in teaching in the nineties. Since 1996, the Internet has become both a teaching aid and the subject of research and education in all four branches. These changes have especially influenced curriculum development in the field of librarianship and courses of knowledge organization. Some major changes have occurred in the subjects which belong to this common field: the theory of classification, classification systems, and document indexing. This resulted in the expansion of the area of indexing and information retrieval, and changes in content and methods of teaching classification. With the further development of network technology and changes in information management, this first phase of curriculum development activities transgressed to more specific research into emerging and rapidly expanding subject areas. Expertise in metadata systems, network information architecture, knowledge management,
knowledge organization in digital libraries, portals, vortals and hubs, are about to reshape the professional profile of future library specialists.

In 2001, Department of Information sciences teaching and research staff have started several projects to enable further planned and organized curriculum development that would bring the way this new subject areas are exploited in library and information science (LIS) curricula in line with international practice. The endorsement of ECTS — the European Credit Transfer System — by Croatian universities, in the period 1999/2000, has put even more stress on the transparency and compatibility of this curriculum.

Also, with the implementation of new projects, course delivery and teaching techniques that have not been subject to review and revision for some time have been brought to the attention of academic and research staff. The previous phase of curriculum research and development, spanning the period from 1996 to 2001, has clearly demonstrated a potential area of development in teaching techniques and methods and further expansion of the virtual learning environment. The growth in the number of part-time students in, for instance, librarianship, has also brought into focus the need to update and digitize course materials, and to establish better procedures for course administration and communication with students. This has now become the focus of two research projects.

The first is a three year project: *Organization of Information and Knowledge in the Electronic Learning Environment* (Organizacija informacija i znanja u elektronskom obrazovnom okruženju — http://infoz.ffzg.hr/oizeoo), and is funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science. It explores issues within the electronic learning environment and started in September 2002. The second project addresses curriculum content development including issues of delivery, presentation, course organization and evaluation, and is being developed under the umbrella of the TEMPUS project. This paper will summarise the curriculum development planned and the progress achieved within a section of the TEMPUS project undertaken by the Department of Information sciences. It will list the main objectives of the project and highlight important issues of change within the information science curriculum, specifically in the area of knowledge organization. An overview of achievements made within the first 12 months of the project will also be given. Ongoing and future efforts of the team at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, can be observed at the project team web page http://www.ffzg.hr/infoz/tempus/.

Consultancy with project partner South Bank University’s «Library and Information Services» department was especially useful in order to summarise competencies and expertise needed in a modern academic library environment for managing web technology and expanding new information resources and services, such as:

- university electronic and learning resources management
- electronic publishing management
- creation and maintenance of content management systems and university intranet
- purchase and management of literature copyright issues
- access to university, national and international distributed library systems
- access to bibliographic databases
- electronic journals management
- inter-library lending and document supply (electronic delivery)
- IT training for students and staff

The main library in South Bank University, visited by the Zagreb team for instance, employs and trains librarians who carry out this as well as all other traditional library services used by 15,000 students.

Staff exchange with City University in London, on the other hand, offered a closer look at course delivery and course content in the field of knowledge organization that is typical of British universities. This includes the content of course programmes tailored to satisfy market needs such as master degrees in electronic publishing, pharmaceutical information management, health care technology, geographical information etc. The organization of course delivery was also observed. Some courses are organized and run throughout the year, others are compressed in, for example, 10 or 12 weeks. Course material is provided on-line and learning management systems are in place to support both regular and distant learning, which enable intensive subject oriented teacher-student, and student-student communication.
Conclusion

Strategic planning is a process in which the librarians of the university libraries outline program-objectives and accomplish them according to changed requirements of the learning environment and this kind of planning should prevent unexpected and unsystematic changes. The libraries at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb are under great pressure and their development has to be in coordination with the development of the entire faculty.

Until recently academic libraries had been evaluated solely through figures indicating quantity and the annual increase in the number of the library’s titles, unlike today when central importance is placed on the quality of the library’s titles and services and especially on the influence a library has on its academic environment. Changes in the environment of the libraries require corresponding changes in library-programmes and constant additional training on the part of the members of the library staff.

Recent changes in the methods and the organization of higher education, the democratisation of the social processes, and further changes in the close as well as in general environment of the institutions of higher education have affected both the definition of the mission of the libraries and their actual programmes and methods of work. The image of isolation and self-sufficiency has become unacceptable for contemporary academic libraries. The libraries have become the integral part of the scientific and pedagogic activities, and distribution of knowledge their main objective. Since they are part of the global environment that is constantly changing, they have to be able to recognize these changes and act in response to them and thus function as a dynamic future-oriented system.

References