The importance of electronic library services for academic study and research

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Summary:
Academic libraries have become new actors in the process of distance learning among other factors of education and research. Due to the new storage media and new channels for transmitting information, university libraries complete the formation of the universities. Libraries are reshaping its services; we speak about electronic references, full text data access, Web resources, that are integral part of university education in the electronic environment. Our discussion focuses on the Central University Library of Bucharest as the actor in learning and e learning with few examples of electronic services that it provides. The librarians also have to adapt to the e-delivery and storage of information, to form and to inform about the e-resources for learning. We have to develop national strategies and add value to the role of university library as a key factor in e learning delivery.

Key words: University, Open distance, Research, Learning, Higher education

The option for an analysis of electronic library services for university study and research, has found a double meaning: a theoretical one, driven by the need for theoretical approaches, in the documentary area, in which the information produced changes of quality, quantity and structure, with consequences on the management process, but mostly a practical one, given that professions have undergone numerous changes and transformations, and the ability required by the new dimensions of services are complex. Electronic services in a information university structure are complementary to the electronic services of the university itself, determined in recent years to rethink its procedures for providing the educational process.

Through the very function, the university libraries provide access to information in conjunction with the Curriculum, assist users in the process of information literacy and last but not least, are training centers for specialized personnel. Keeping the traditional elements of novelty the university library adds information, offering users new ways to information and documentation. It is rooted in recent years the expression "learn anywhere and anytime", which obviously leads to the thought of alternative information, communication and education. If the educational system promotes an 'education for all', aiming at training beyond geographical barriers, age, proposing options for study at a distance, the institutions of information at the university level will be forced to rethink new sources of information, and, implicitly new distribution channels. Structures with the common target population, university teachers, students and researchers, university and the university library must structure its services in accordance with the needs and dynamics of the beneficiary population. The task of correlation functions of information, documentation and research of the libraries with the university study programme but also with the movement of the field at international scale goes to the manager as science and to the manager, who must define new evolving trends and structure resources that meet the users' requirements of study and research. The current university education system is facing a fundamental problem: the diversification of information transmitted format but also with changes in content, aspect which leads to a new philosophy of education. Thus, an optimal structure of education must provide a curriculum with clearly defined learning objectives, consistent, counseling and library services. If the educational process allows adaptation of technologies should mention that not the same happens with the adjustment of context information and education. Web became first a mean of information and then support for students learning, the economic aspect playing a determinant role. Whether we refer at the traditional learning or the 'remote' and online learning education and information need the electronic component. With regard to future prospects of the libraries in the new technological context, we agree Ion Stoica's considerations: "The diversity of structures, quantity, different codes, novelty of technology forces the info documentary systems, regardless of size, and even more, networks, highlighting clear and systematic resources".1

The Central University Library is such institution, which through its functions, comes to fulfill the role of the university, to form, educate, and train. If through the content availability the library meets the primary mission to inform, through involvement in the conduct of major cultural events is defined as cultural agent, by providing complementary specialized librarianship training, and by assisting in the processes of research and becoming a provider of training and research support, the library mission increases.

Without a direct relationship with the structures of distance learning, libraries provide materials at a distance, including: newspapers, magazines, reference works, however, to address students and distance will have to increase online materials, and to design a coherent digitization of local materials. Although universities have offered
alternative of learning: telecourses, satellite training, Internet, email, students learning options are still disproportionate, which led to the diversification of broadcast media courses. Educational process must be regarded in conjunction with the economic, social and cultural context. In a knowledge-based society, progress will be on side of the states whose population acquired skills in processing information in everyday work. The importance of systemic approaches must be stressed besides that of information technology, with emphasis on increasing access to education, on improving efficiency and quality of the study.

The concern to create new fields in science and to achieve perfect agreement between the current objectives of school education and instructive factors that contribute to completing the objectives and educational resources and information has become more than the highest priority of national education system. We share the view of Ion Stoica about the need to adapt information services to provided types of education: “The concept distance education is fuller of tracks than those which send a simple decoding of the two terms. In fact, contemporary man is frequently in a position to use sources of information, which go beyond proximity and offer specific tools and ways of access.”

On the basis of educational plans, analytical programme, orientation of courses, textbooks, specialized treaties should not stand interrogation as: What kind of experts to prepare and with what capacity of coverage the information universe? as a condition for increasing the powers of its graduates with a view to becoming society.

The university role is to initiate and innovate, to train and to support scientific research, to shape the society which is reinforced by the library. The mixture of the items of information technology with university discipline determined: higher correlation with the development of science and technique, equalizing educational opportunities in an open, diverse and modern learning system, European cooperation between educational systems, decentralization and the reform of the school education management to connect communication systems worldwide, organization of higher education in colleges, universities short / long-term, electronic services offered by university libraries, themselves become the subjects of analysis, which aims: increasing access to the information, education and research opportunities, diversification of initial and continuous training programmes.

The effects of these services outline the role of the library as a factor of instruction in the national context and within the educational policies. The emergence of electronic formats reflects the changes taking place in libraries and centers of information and documentation, the trend towards the size of digital services.

All university libraries keep the traditional services of information, gradually adding elements of remotely electronic access. Such a feature is Web-OPAC (online public access catalogue), which users can access from anywhere: from the library or from a terminal connected to the web page. Connecting resources through a single interface has been possible because the Z 39: 50 protocol exchange, which subsequently allowed bibliographic data linking of full-text documents. Any user, teacher, student or researcher, who access bibliographic data in such a manner, can make other types of search on certain keywords, topic, author, title, area. Thus, a bibliographical structure can be organized by clear criteria.

It is the merit of a field benefiting from the power of both librarians and the automation specialists, and the advantage to those who, through their study and research fulfill the professional training. The online catalogue allowed unlimited access to data and documents without restrictions of space and time, librarians becoming content experts in search and the access, and libraries highlighting its missions through the quantity of documents and information through speed and quality of information: “The main concern of any contemporary info documentation structure is the need for information and study of users, regardless of the sources used and their status. The collection begins to play a secondary role”

If for the beginning there were an “reference office” in a traditional manner, for guidance and advice regarding the use of library services with staff empowered, thereafter it has been switching to “reference services by phone”, today we can speak about “references by mail”, or “virtual reference”, complete, accurate, concise defined by the form nature and transmission channel. So, when a reader is registered, the library has all informational parameters. In many university libraries, the references office, and mail reference service coexist, to satisfy both users in the reading rooms and to respond to users from a distance. The documentation services value is given by the diversity of channels and media information, but also the quantity and quality of resources.

A relevant example is the RO-REM (References E-mail Romania project) initiated by the Reference Section of the Association of Education Librarians in Romania in order to satisfy the need to inform users in terms of references. The project objectives aims to interact the request for reference, so that a larger number of sources can provide
answers complete, comprehensive, but also to save time user search information. In this regard, the portal that hosts the form of references, questions connect to a forum that has access partners in the project. We are talking about such an integrative national service, which contributes substantially to communication and collaboration at the international scale, which examines progressively toward what is proceeding the need for study and research of the library users, but also which design optimal response ways.

From the perspective of providing access to resources, one of the objectives of collection development policy in Central University Library of Bucharest is the reference collections acquisition of database but also the achievement of consortia with other similar institutions in order to purchase periodicals. A very important aspect of acquisitions, which BCU Bucharest takes into account, is the orientation towards the suggestions of users. The need for information of readers reflected both in requests from the reference questions but especially the suggestions listed on the special bulletins, guide the specialists in the development of a coherent and well-defined policy.

The emergence of electronic documents has changed the relationship between the two institutions publishers-libraries, whose mission is to facilitate access to information regardless of how the book is presented, traditional or electronic, decisive being the issue of copyright and licensing for use.

Beyond librarianship distinct tasks orientation, there is a whole management process to be thoroughly carried out on the financial coordinate, of personnel and technology involved. Of all these, the most acute problem represents a decrease of the budget appropriations and increasing processing costs.

In the paper “Developing library collections and information center” Evans, GE says: “The electronic environment creates several dichotomies...print versus electronic; ownership versus access; user versus institutional need; free versus fee; gatekeeper versus user selection. It is not a matter of either/or, rather it is a matter of determining the proper local mix” Evans believes that, for the electronic documents criteria to determine the acquisition is: library policy, technical support costs, the degree of demand, publishers, while for other categories such as CD-ROMs, the criterion is support hard-soft, quality, or the degree of authenticity. We agree with the vision of researchers Smith, E. Johnson and P. regarding changes procurement policy, which must be done qualitatively, in order to meet the immediate needs of users. The issue of collections development, started with a few decades ago, sought mainly to solve the lack of space in the library and documentation info-center. But because of high storage capacity new media information have, the issue of space disappeared in the specialists discussion amounting to the role of libraries in facilitating access to available documents and users who directly access OPAC and other resources in the network.

We consider relevant the views of British researchers who looked these changes brought by technology factors that increase communication and inter cooperation because, for providing physical access to documents, libraries must ensure the flow of communications, and to enjoy the standards of access to sharing resources, to provide services at a distance. The idea of belonging to consortia, the need for association with a view to sharing information is underline by Ion Stoica, which calls for development of university library cooperation “cooperation means negotiating, recognizing the interests of others, specialization and above all, communication profound, total... The concept is the most proprietary to the information society as a form of Meta cognition indispensable to the contemporary existence.”

The formative value of the university library resources comes from the plurality of their wealth information, but in particular, the impact of procurement policies and communication collections of them in a world dominated by technological diversity Authentication, authorization and personalization are new component of library services in their relationship with users, determined largely by the costs of access. The provisions of such services are conducted on the basis of password identification.

Access to users outside the university campus is becoming more necessary, especially for those forms of distance learning. Relevant is the example of John Rayland’s University Library, whose sources largely accessible by remote users demand authorization for those outside the university campus. Electronic resources are generally databases, journals in electronic format, but full-text available in the same network in the same library, making access to them by connecting the computer on which the searcher network that is part of, or only with the offices specialized libraries. Central University Library in Bucharest provides its users access the following databases:

**Proquest** offers in formations in electronic form for many training and informative structures such as universities schools libraries but also the administrative and governmental structures. There is a well-defined informational
dissemination policy. A special importance has the correlation between university curricula and the content of the informations or, the effort to adapt the information to the student need in order to make the student work more efficient. For a better use of these databases Proquest provides teachers and librarians charged with a series of reference materials, guides and references designed to make rules for search and information much more accessible, an interface that adapts to any web opaque, providing direct links with other databases including mention: Ingenta, OCLC full text Sweetswise. Chadwick Healey integrated Proquest includes text matches series of publications on

**Ebsco** is considered global supplier of materials print and online periodicals is available in the BCU, libraries and branches, is structured as follows: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Library Information Science; Technology Abstract, Ebsco AY. Ebsco database provides full-text databases secondary, as EconLit, Hospitality & Tourism Index and PsycInfo, with links to e-journals and other evidence provided full text. Because of high costs that such a database is oriented to the main library consortia.

**Springer Link** is a dedicated database for applied sciences; it provides access to abstracts and full text versions of articles published in specialized journals and electronic books. It includes a series of virtual libraries subject structured. Springer's information resources Link cover areas such as medicine, science, ecology, chemistry, social sciences, astronomy, and architecture.

**Emerald Management Extra** is the largest online database of management for academics. The database provides access to over 175 serial publications with access to full-text reviews, case studies, information on conferences, references, interviews, etc. Publications are structured the three major collections: Business & Management, Librarianship & information science, Science and Engineering.

**Sweets Wise Online Content** provides information from schools and technical periodicals but also from research, social sciences and arts.

**Ulrich** provides bibliographic materials from academic publications, schools, newspapers and magazines around the world.

**Embase** is a source of information on medical and pharmacological offering information about the latest scientific research in the field. Includes a treasury of scientific terms Emtree appointed, with a hierarchical structure, which enables description of biomedical information.

**Scopus** is an abstract database it addresses to scientific research by providing access to more than 1200 newspapers, over 380 web pages and over 200 sets of books.

**Euref** was created under the Phare programme in Europe to support the process of European Union integration process provides information resources on European issues, addressing to specialists and the general public. The main partners of this project are Euro Info Centre of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania, National Institute of Information and Documentation, National Library of Romania, ‘Carol I’ Central University Library and Bucharest, and Information Centre of the European Commission in Romania.

The Euref structure comprises three-coordinated information: European portals, specialised libraries, and European institutions.

- **Web resources** of Central University Library of Bucharest:
  - a) **Online encyclopedias** including the British Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Hachette, Encarta Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Mythica, Encyclopedia technique,
  - b) **Libraries, culture and education portals**: Unesco Libraries Portal, the Internet Public Library, eSchoolnet, Teleeducation,
  - c) **Online dictionaries**: On-line dictionaries, The exploding dictionary,
  - d) **Bibliographies and references**: Linguistic Bibliography, Reference desk,

Licenses for use are the elements that make the access and dissemination of documents. They are considered contracts between two parts, with a role of supplier and beneficiary. Unlike them, copyright law has equal effect on the institutions and conditions imposed on different categories of documents. University libraries are forced to negotiate the purchase of licenses depending on the type of access that is going to provide it, but limited by financial resources. In this regard, the big companies providing information SWETSNet, Blackwell's, OCLS First Search Springer Link provides prints online facilities, online or CD-ROM. Chest is the institution in the UK that
arrange negotiations between the documentation structures and negotiations between libraries and software providers, for electronic journals is NESLI.

The Romanian university libraries have hybrid libraries status. We can not talk about strictly electronic services or strictly traditional structures. Neither information needs are no longer limited to require one of two ways. The conceptual difference is shaped by the Explanatory Dictionary of librarianship and Information Science, which defines the digital library: *the library which in terms of content is similar library with publications on paper, but the documents were stored in digital form can be accessed remotely.*

Digital libraries are not limited to providing full-text documents, but have a much higher attribute: to allow access at international scale through hyperlinks to the services and digital products provided by other institutions.

In this regard, project developed by the British Library - Digital Library Programme deserves mentioned where 'digital library' term is used to restrict only to define "that *entity which will purchase, store, use, and publish digital technologies with different types of documents in electronic format.*"¹⁰ If the number of works, in the digital libraries, gives the weight of traditional library the focus is on the digital documents form and multiplication of distribution channels.

The transposition of text, images and objects in digital format involves conversion into a standard format, optical recognition (Optical Character Recognition), the creation and import descriptions, use special techniques nontext materials. Digital documents require a severe assessment aimed at sustainability, the possibility of updates, authenticity.

University's electronic library services and the traditional ones, seek to cover informational sources and to meet the requirements of different ways to users. In this respect, Ion Stoica pleads for reshape of the structures: "*The integration of all types of sources primarily, printed and numeric information using convergence fund that documentary spectrum forever has, despite its formal diversity, became perhaps the most important contemporary mission of the info-documentary structures. They should continuously reconsider information products from the perspective of integration into ends that meet the needs best.*"¹¹

University libraries, users, various types of information resources but in particular channels of distribution have determined: optimizing research by providing various information resources (databases, personalized services, portals, electronic resources), work abilities of users through the adoption of new search methods, understanding the value of information for research, library spaces near learning, increase educational performance of the university by achieving high levels of professional performance.

The role of specialized personnel in carrying out specific processes in electronic libraries is one major policy and management recruitment and maintenance professionals must be rigorous. It is necessary to be the analysis of the entire organizational structure to best carry out the mission library. Since the librarianship has undergone transformations due to developments and information technologies, university libraries have been forced to rethink specialized modules for specialists both locally and nationally.

The 'professional development' platform of Central Library University of Bucharest, includes aspects that identifies directions for development in the field, the implications of information technology plan, but especially, underlines the formation of new working habits of librarians. University libraries are open to new developments and information resources, human and services are factors for progress.

The present analysis reflects only a few aspects of the consequences of the new technologies of information and communication they have exerted on the services offered by university documentary info-structures, on the users, with accents on the education and research.

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