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THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN RESEARCH PROCESS

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Abstract: At present, people generally accept the idea that university library has a primordial role in the acquisition of the skills of recognition of the need of information, but also of evaluation and use of the information ethically. One of the objectives of the library is that the training may develop the students' and researchers' innovative thinking, and their ability to use the research results. One can affirm the need to have an innovation-oriented attitude in research, for instance creative thinking or identifying, looking for, evaluating and using information to establish the research objective and solve problems creatively. In the present paper, our desire is to demonstrate the essential role of university library in the academic research activity, and to present the most important aspects related to the new discoveries in the studies on information retrieval, thus providing a basis for new research topics in Information Literacy.

Keywords: university library, information literacy, research process, informational resources, information society

Introduction

Research Information Literacy is closely related to the Information Science and includes the holding of skills related to: identifying the research need for domains of special interest, selection based on investigation, understanding the rhythm and the main approach perspective in the research domain, identifying knowledge gaps and critical research points, and applying scientific research.

A university library generally holds a vast list of information resources, traditional and not only, is served by specialists who can provide guidance in the domain related to Information Literacy and is able to develop a healthy learning and research environment. Information Literacy training can become the most valuable service of such an academic institution, the role of the university library being better highlighted in this way.

Which are, however, the arguments coming in favour of the obtaining by the libraries of this determining role of the information society? The first argument is the proximity of the institution to the information of major interest, academic or professional. Libraries buy on a daily basis books, reviews, databases or other editorial products. By this fact, they assure the fundament of the research, both the raw matter on which the scientific research process will take place and the large framework of hypotheses generating new subjects to explore. It is natural for the first questions on the information evolution to have appeared in libraries, such as those questions regarding its management, keeping, evaluation, protection and dissemination. Here are a few themes that can generate IL research programmes, and the latter, in turn, multi-annual research projects with a high potential of interest for the society. A society intelligently exploiting the informational resources available to it is a competitive society, able to create values. And the university library has, more than any other institution, the raw matter needed to undertake a rigorous research on these themes.

The second argument is that university libraries are the first institutions of public interest coming in contact with the new technologies, and unlike a publishing house or a software producer, libraries have two great advantages: access to resources destined for public research (financial resources, material resources – laboratories – and specialized human resources) and the fact that they belong to the academic environment.

Last but not least, the great advantage of university libraries for performing in the RIL domain is that of implementing their own studies (as results of the research), of testing their own hypotheses, of collecting preliminary and intermediate data, so necessary to the research activity. University libraries have an impressive number of users, and this can become the best advantage libraries will provide as titulars or partners of such research projects. By the variety of the information and the way the information is used, these users offer not just the quantity, but also the quality so necessary to the development of studies specific of the research in the IL domain.

Training in the Information Literacy domain

Information Literacy represents a set of skills allowing a person to recognize the information need and acquire the skill to locate it, evaluate it and use it efficiently[1]. The idea of advanced IL training is based on information itself and on the ability of IL to:

- recognize the need for information;
- access the necessary information efficiently;
- evaluate information critically;
- incorporate the information selected in a knowledge base;
- use information efficiently to accomplish a precise goal;
- understand the economic, legal and social aspects related to the use of information.

Beside the principles defining RIL, there are a few unique aspects related to the progress in this domain focused on the need for scientific research. These aspects include[2]:

- identifying the critical points of the research by analyzing the existing information and finding new scientific research opportunities;
- selecting a subject that incorporates the researcher's knowledge basis and history and assures originality;
- establishing the research direction for scientific innovation;
- selecting the principal direction of the project independantly from other research projects;
- proposing a scientific hypothesis that applies the concept of intellectual property and relies on advanced theory and technology.

Developing Research Information Literacy based on the need for research

A university library is usually faced with numerous and varied demands of scientific information regarding the research themes its users participate in. These demands can be divided into different types according to the research stage. Sometimes the users need to look for complete information, while at other times they only need strictly statistical data. The library personnel must develop training programmes depending on these informational needs. In the initial research stage, the demands mainly involve: knowledge and in-depth study of the

[1] American Library Association. Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. *Final Report*.Chicago: American Library Association, 1989.
[2] SCHAMBER, Linda. Relevance and information behavior. In: *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, 1994, vol. 29, p. 3-48.

basic concept of the research, obtaining basic information, history of the problem, terminology, realization of the general research framework and of the trends in the domain.[3] RIL training must assure methods that can lead to obtaining diverse types of information, especially for BSc/BA, masteral and doctoral students, since they are active especially in this research stage. In the research development stage, RIL training should help students and from now on, researchers, too, to be prepared to efficiently define search structures, use bibliographic references for the research, cite other works, and help them improve their way of thinking, which is at the heart of the research process. Moreover, RIL training should solve any problem related to obtaining information, acquiring the methods of presentation of the research stages, using images or graphs in works, and creating a personal bibliography. In the final stage of the research, the student or researcher receiving RIL training should be able to collect and evaluate the research results under the form of a written paper. RIL training should lead the above-mentioned subjects to ways of reviewing and renewing the information, of evaluating the research results themselves, of finding the scientific bases useful to them, of evaluating the information, of synthesizing, critically analyzing and incorporating diverse sources of information.[4]

For the university graduates supposed to be already mastering the methods of obtaining information and familiar with the methods of selection of the information retrieval theme, RIL training should focus on several aspects such as: adjusting the methods of selection of the research topics, choosing, analyzing and researching the information content, selecting and classifying the research results depending on their relevance, identifying critical research points.[5] All these should lead to obtaining original research results, identifying research opportunities, and discovering possibilities of initiating new research projects.

Conclusions

The concept of Information Literacy is widely spread worldwide, especially in the academic and research environment. Librarians need to expect not just to offer services concerning the access to information, but also the training regarding the equipments allowing access to it. Teachers and researchers have become much more concerned regarding the modality of developing a deeper use of IL training. Extending IL training in order to develop RIL training can be a challenge, but must not prevent the development of the students' skills in scientific research innovation. Trying to attain all these objectives, university libraries not only play a very important role in the general development of the university, but also extend a university's traditional functions, becoming an incubator for the research in this so necessary domain, namely information science.

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