Libraries as Drivers for Change - A report about the 6th UNICA Scholarly Communication Seminar

A Report by Françoise Vandooren, Université libre de Bruxelles
fdooren@ulb.ac.be
9 January 2013

On 26-27 November 2012 the 6th Scholarly Communication Seminar of UNICA, the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe, took place in Brussels, at the Université libre de Bruxelles and at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, in Belgium. The conference was organized by the UNICA Scholarly Communication Core Group http://www.unica-network.eu/group/scholarly-communication. It was attended by 80 participants coming from 21 UNICA member universities from all over Europe. All the presentations and posters are available on the UNICA web site: http://www.unica-network.eu/event/6th-unica-scholarly-communication-seminar-libraries-as-drivers-for-change-brussels-26-27-novem

Introduction

The first day of the conference was hosted by the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and took place in the Library of Human Sciences. The UNICA President, Stavros Zenios, and the Director of ULB Archives & Libraries, Jean-Pierre Devroey opened the conference. They welcomed the participants and briefly presented the programme of the next two days. Then they left the floor to Filippos Tsimpoglou, Library Director at University of Cyprus, and member of the UNICA Scholarly Communication Core Group, to explain the activities and achievements of this group; Mr Tsimpoglou recently had the opportunity to raise awareness of the Rectors of UNICA universities, at the last UNICA General Assembly in Cyprus, on issues related to scholarly communication and libraries, open access, and the EU policy on access and preservation of scientific information. He recalled that the group has been organising a Scholarly Communication seminar every two years since 2002 with the aim to put in common experiences in a new professional framework, to acknowledge the enormous effects that the new economic and scholarly communication management models have for our institutions and to outline concrete proposals.

Opening speech

In his opening speech, Philippe Emplit, Vice Rector for Teaching and Learning at ULB, raised the question of how to provide adequate learning environments for students in the university. He mentioned the learning centre model as providing a global and integrated approach of knowledge building and dissemination by reducing the barriers between the pedagogical approaches on the one hand, and the provision of information and technologies on the other hand. The services which are available in a Learning Centre should not be reduced to providing access to information technologies but should also contribute to new teaching and learning practices, and in order to reach these aims, learning centres should provide adapted spaces, services and information resources.

Session 1: Vision of the library

Wilhelm Widmark, Library Director at Stockholm University, chaired the first session in which three speakers presented their vision of the university library from different points of view: as a student, as a researcher and as a professor. Allan Päll, Vice-President of European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and former Chairperson of European Students Union, stressed that for students, libraries are to provide traditional services as well as support for learning and for developing skills graduates are expected to have when looking for a job. He mentioned a series of keywords that should characterize the library and the University at large, a.o.: accessible, i.e. providing access to resources and learning spaces; openness, i.e. developing skills of collaboration and cooperation; integrated and supportive, i.e. integrating teaching and learning in the curriculum, and integrating libraries as part of the whole support services; quality, i.e. developing a quality culture.

For Paul Geerlings, Dean of the Faculty of Science at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the researcher's ideal library would provide equal access to all researchers to the information resources they need. However this cannot be achieved because libraries are tightened by publishers and by the culture of publishing which leads to an astonishing and permanent increase in the number of publications and of journals, and to a position of monopoly of some big commercial publishers. He calls for a change in decision makers' policy for measuring the output and impact of individual researchers, and asks whether it is not time for an EU initiative to create a research monitoring instrument governed by peers. Regarding libraries as physical spaces, there must be incentives for researchers to go to the library or Learning Centre, such as research areas, hubs where researchers can meet, work and develop communication skills. As a comment to this presentation, Lars Bjørnshauge from SPARC Europe underlined the importance of guaranteeing access to publications to perform text mining, given the monopoly of some companies in assessing scientific research.

Jean-Luc Demeulemeester, Professor of Economics at ULB, sketched the evolution of libraries through his own personal experience, concluding that nowadays remote access to electronic resources kept him away from the library, except for borrowing books. He said that he felt responsible in contributing to the development of the library by ordering the key books of his field for today and tomorrow students, although this view was not widespread among professors. While he perceives some problems that libraries are facing, such as capacity problems, information processing problems (how to find your ways in the documents, how to be critical enough regarding sources quality?) and economic problems (increasing price of journals but less public funds; impact of R.A.E. on the collections…), he identifies some needs that libraries have to meet: meeting places for professors, seminar rooms, information literacy training for students, awareness raising of collections and information resources, repository of knowledge, bibliometric analysis and research assessment.

Session 2 : Reshaping services – How to Meet the Users' Changing Needs?

The second session, chaired by Kaisa Sinikara, University Librarian at the University of Helsinki, concentrated on reshaping services to meet the users' changing needs. Mikko Koivisto who is Lead Service Designer at the design agency Diagonal in Helsinki, presented a project of service design for the Helsinki University Main Library that was held as part of the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 programme. The project focused on general services for students and the approach was based on service design, i.e. innovating and designing services with the help of design thinking, and

participatory design, i.e. including the future service users in the service development process. The different phases of the design process included: the user study, applying various methodologies (observation, key user interviews, focus groups, forum) and leading to the definition of four central customer profiles; strategic design, which included educating library staff to design thinking; concept design, i.e. visualizing and prototyping service concepts ; implementation, including piloting the services. The speaker presented examples of final services that were designed: advice for using study circle rooms based on cards and a wiki; colour coded spaces; work instructions for staff; service pictograms; staff visibility; starter kits. He underlined that one of the achievements of the project was the emergence of a more customer centric service culture among the staff.

The next two speakers, Nick Woolley and Gavin Beattie from Library Services, King's College London, concentrated on library services for researchers. Besides the traditional support services they provide to researchers, which include training, physical library spaces, bibliometrics, document delivery and collection development, they pointed to emerging needs they are going to address: extending access to ebooks; collaborative storage of low use print journals to secure access to journals and enable space redevelopment; collaborative collections management across libraries, including metadata aggregation to analyse and compare print collections; interconnecting the Institutional Repository with the general CRIS (Current Research Information System), drawing data from different databases to provide a single research portal (output, activities, persons, projects etc.); managing Article Processing Charges to support publication in Open Access journals; developing a policy on research data management and providing training and advice on compliance with legislation and requirements of funders. Finally, they mentioned the *Rethinking the Research Library Model* project lead by Research Libraries UK.

The last speaker of the session, Christian Brouwer, Director of the Human Sciences Library at ULB, outlined the objectives and the outputs of a series of meetings of librarians and scholars. Based on the observation that scholars do not come to the library building and that librarians meet them less and less, members of research centres were invited to meet librarians to talk about the library collections, services and tools in order for the librarians to know the researchers' expectations. The main outcome reveals concerns with the image of the library and the understanding of its services. Scholars were concerned about the purchase of books and subscription to electronic journals; librarians had the opportunity to explain the workflow of ordering and cataloguing books, as well as budgetary and big deals constraints. The speaker concluded that efforts had to be done to maintain and develop the dialogue with scholars, to work up permanent and formal channels of information, and to set up a training program for scholars.

Session 3: Developing Skills

Patrick Vanouplines, Head Librarian at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, chaired this session devoted to developing the skills required by librarians to meet the users' changing needs.

Sirje Virkus, professor at the Institute of Information Studies at Tallinn University, talked about Library and Information Science (LIS) education, its evolution and the challenges it is facing. LIS education has developed in the past decade through curricular revision, organisational change, ICT implementation and other actions. New courses and specializations have been introduced in the curricula, such as digital libraries, web site design, knowledge management etc. The speaker underlined a number of issues that remain, such as the development of ICTs which are both part of

the course content and a means for pedagogy, new pedagogical approaches, collaboration and partnership, match to the labour market and societal needs, the relationship between theory and practice, etc. She mentioned how the Institute of Information Studies of Tallinn University responds to some of these challenges notably through partnership and cooperation, such as the Erasmus Mundus joint master programme for Digital Library Learning (Oslo-Parma-Tallinn); new pedagogical approaches based on student-centred learning and constructivist models of learning; technological innovation and the use of ICTs in LIS education; and the development of entrepreneurial skills.

The second speaker of the session, Antti Virrankoski from Helsinki University Library, adopted a user-centred approach in his analysis of the required librarians' skills. According to him, librarians should develop their ability to communicate with academics, their knowledge of the research process as well as marketing, pedagogical and service design competences. However the way library information and services are provided should also be rethought and viewed in the eyes of users, and the speaker illustrated this with a series of what users need and what they do not need, as well "to-do" and "not-to-do" for libraries; for example, do not market, inform, flood and over feed but do co-work, co-operate, co-teach and show value; do not provide new information retrieval system and teach how to use it, but do integrate metadata in the users' own information search and usage environment.

Poster session and social event

Nine posters were displayed outside the conference room on a variety of topics: user needs, learning centre, publishing activities, collection evaluation... Each poster author gave a three-minutes presentation of his/her poster in the plenary session and then participants had plenty of time to visit posters. A visit of the ULB Human Science Library was organised afterwards.

In the evening, the participants of the conference enjoyed a delicious dinner in a typical Brussels restaurant in the historic centre of the city.

Session 4: Redefining Contents

The second day of the conference was hosted by the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB). The Rector of the VUB welcomed the international guests, and Filippos Tsimpoglou, Library Director at University of Cyprus, chaired the first session of the day devoted to library contents issues. Wilhelm Widmark, Library Director at Stockholm University, addressed collection development issues in a changing environment characterised by the shift from print to electronic. He outlined the consequences for the staff, such as the new skills required in IT, negotiation and law, and presented the reorganisation of the acquisition department in his library, where subject or material divisions have been eliminated. The acquisition policy aims to be cost-effective, flexible, user-driven, fast, and to prefer electronic to print. The library is experimenting Patron Drive Acquisition models for ebooks and is examining how to integrate Open Access and publication issues in its global strategy. Sylvia Van Peteghem, Head Librarian at Universiteit Gent, talked about the library collaboration with Google to digitize 250.000 books from the library collections. She explained how the Google project enabled to discover treasures in the collections, and how the project success relied on the enthusiasm, loyalty and team spirit of the staff. Since Google took care of digitization, the library decided to focus on how to present ebooks and on being present where the user is.

Miguel-Angel Sicilia, Professor of Computer Science at Alcala University, outlined what Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) are; they comprise indicators and information about researchers, organisations, programmes and projects as well as research outcomes, and provide an integrated approach towards managing research information. Thus Institutional repositories must be linked to CRIS, and should include not only publications but also datasets. He supported a Linked Open Data approach in order to link data archived in different repositories.

Natalia Manola, from the University of Athens, presented the OpenAIRE EC-funded project which aims to provide the Open Access knowledge infrastructure for Europe. She outlined the data model which is linking information on publication, data and project, as well as the services provided by the platform for researchers, data providers, project coordinators, and research administrators. She pointed to other possible outcomes, such as use for the European Grid Initiatives, and the opportunity of OpenAIRE usage statistics as alternative measures of impact. Lars Bjørnshauge, from SPARC Europe, focused on the development of Open Access. He stated that more than 10% of the annual production of journal articles are published in Open Access journals and almost 10% are archived in Institutional repositories. He outlined the national and cross-national programmes and activities to support and implement Open Access but also underlined the main obstacles to the global uptake of OA: the current dissemination system is dysfunctional and expensive but the reward mechanisms support this traditional system. He denounced a lack of courage of decision makers and the inertia of academia and urged them to reclaim the responsibility for the dissemination of research results and research data. Celina Ramjoué, from the European Commission DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CONNECT), presented what the European Commission has been doing to optimise the impact of publicly funded scientific research, and in particular its Open Access policy. In the next framework programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, there will be a general principle of open access to publications and both 'Green' and 'Gold' open access measures should be promoted in Europe. There will also be a pilot to explore open access to data, taking into account privacy, security and commercial interests. The EC has also issued recommendations to Member States to define policies and to implement open access to and preservation of publication and research data.

Session 5: Rethinking Spaces

In this session, chaired by Françoise Vandooren from the Archives & Libraries Head Office at ULB, five interesting projects on rethinking library spaces were presented. Anne Järvinen, Head of department at Stockholm University Library, explained how the library staff was involved in the refurbishment of the main library; they participated to a project to describe the activities and workflows in the library in order to prepare a commission to architects and builders. She insisted on the importance of communication during the project, which was achieved through a blog and through the spokesperson who kept the staff informed and involved. Patrick Vanouplines, Head Librarian at VUB, and Dominique Lerinckx, Director of Science & Technology Library at ULB, presented two sides of the same project, namely building a new library and learning centre as an interuniversity initiative. Mr Vanouplines focused on figures and norms and concluded that although standards and norms for calculating library surfaces were useful, common sense and existing buildings also provide valuable estimations that have to be taken into account. Mrs Lerinckx concentrated on the services to be delivered to users which will make the difference between a high-tech library and a learning centre.

She underlined the importance to focus on the process in which the patrons are engaged; the learning centre should provide spaces, tools, services and contents to support the research and learning process in order to raise the students' motivation, participation and creativity. Filippos Tsimpoglou, Library Director at University of Cyprus, presented the project to build a new library at the University of Cyprus, designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel. He focused on the questions which have to be addressed by any new library designer, rather than on the answers given in the particular context of this project. He mentioned problems encountered to communicate with architects and some principles which had to be commonly understood, agreed and finalised, such as: the zones of use, which must be clearly identifiable, easy user orientation, space use flexibility and expandability. He displayed some plans of the new library. Kaisa Sinikara, University Librarian at the University of Helsinki, presented a brand new library that was opened in September 2012 on the city centre campus. She explained the key design themes for the different services intended to meet the needs of different types of customers, such as learning services and services for research. She mentioned the main characteristics of the library and showed a lot of photographs. She stated that the architect won different prizes for this building. The last speaker of the session, Gerda Koidla Library Deputy Director at Tallinn University of Technology, presented an evaluation of the university new library that opened in 2009. She explained the main characteristics and how users were involved in the library building process. The evaluation reveals that library staff is satisfied with the working and relaxing areas, the comfortable and attractive furnishing, light, ventilation and heat; the library café, however, is very popular and disturbs library users studying and working in the library. Users appreciated the location; bachelor students like the library atmosphere which is inspiring for creative work, found it a good place to study, easy to use, but regret that there are not enough group study rooms. Master students found that there was too much noise and quiet areas were not respected. Doctoral students appreciated the individual working rooms. Lecturers and researchers appeared to visit the library almost every day; they enjoyed open access collections, display of new publications and the well-designed reader seats!

Closing speech

Gustaaf C. Cornelis, professor of philosophy at VUB, gave an inspiring talk on the library as seen by a philosopher which closed the conference.

Conclusion

University teaching and learning practices as well as information technologies definitely shape the evolution of libraries regarding their services, spaces and contents. The Sixth UNICA Scholarly Communication Seminar addressed some of the issues that libraries are facing to keep up with these changes, especially regarding the skills required by staff and users, the design of services to meet the needs of different types of users, the challenges of providing access to scientific information in an economically dysfunctional publication system, the flexibility of library architecture to adapt to future use. The seminar participants had the opportunity to reflect on and share their experience with colleagues from all over Europe through discussion and exchange in the broad international context of UNICA Universities. No doubt each of them took home ideas to bring his own vision of the library to reality in his university.