

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL EDUCATION IN SERBIA THROUGH CREATING NEW CURRICULA AIMING AT IMPROVING LIBRARIANSHIP STUDIES AT THE FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

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Abstract

The effective education in the field of librarianship depends nowadays on Internet accessibility as well as on the use of modern information technologies, considering the fact that the modern educational process can be improved significantly through the automatization of knowledge. Furthermore, the status of librarianship, as a scientific discipline, within one society relies upon its success in creating an educated, active, efficient, progressive, motivated, flexible and helpful librarian. Accordingly, future library science professionals should be instructed appropriately at universities and then given the opportunity to gain experience while being trained by fellow workers within libraries. As part of the effort to meet the requirements of modern librarianship and library practice, the Faculty of Philology has developed, in accordance with the Bologna principles, a new curriculum, whose flexible contents and possibilities to combine courses according to the needs of students offer even higher compatibility with the labor market demands.

Key words: librarianship, librarian, education, Internet, Faculty of Philology, Bologna principles, new curricula, labor market;

1.1 LIBRARIES AS TREASURERS OF THE NATIONAL AND WORLD MEMORY

Archives, museums and libraries are “the focal points of the community”; these institutions provide “a harmonious blend of rationality and dreams” (Gorman, 2007)¹. They draw public attention as rare, unique collections, pieces of the national cultural heritage puzzle, in which are included manuscripts, books, audio, video and electronic recordings, their authors and publishers, as well as all the cultural workers who gathered around them. They preserve documentary-historical, cultural and scientific heritage, encourage intellectual advancement and contribute to the development of democracy of knowledge. On the “open road” of forming the memory of the world they are faced with challenges of education, contribute to the development of intellectual freedoms, spread informative literacy and general culture, form and standardize descriptions of their funds “for the benefit” of human curiosity, protect their records that they enviously enshrine by means of digitalization.

Resolution of the International Council on Archives (ICA) in Quebec emphasized two basic truths: 1. that libraries, museums and archives are “institutions dealing with the protection of documentary heritage”, and that their collaboration yields positive effects “in terms of investments, profitability and quality of customer service”, 2. that funds of libraries, archives and museums “are integral part of the world documentary heritage” and as such they are equally important for the development of digitization project called Memory of the World. International Council on Archives Congress held in 2005 in Abu Dhabi supported the *Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action*, adopted by IFLA. In this century in which cultural and educational institutions are being recognized as information, communication and “transactional” services, a common concern for the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage establishes a strong link between the local and ethnic community, history, science and culture, contributes to the general cultural map of unique funds fostered by these institutions, as well as to the integrity of the common memory through the process of globalization.

¹ Gorman, M 2007, *Naše neprolazne vrednosti (Our Enduring Values)*, Belgrade.

The very existence of libraries through history has been dependent on various conditions, such as the characteristics and peculiarities of people living in a particular country, as well as the economic and political situation. Based upon the concepts of religion, education, enlightenment, culture and humanities, libraries have always cherished national recognizability as well as full participation in the global flow of knowledge and information, supported in modern times by the development of technology. Great number of libraries on one hand and their narrow specialization on the other have contributed to democratization of reading and to commercialization of librarianship, which brought about specific business ethics and intellectual freedoms.

In years to come, during which Serbia should organize and thoughtfully construct the system of virtual information and communication services, having shared cataloging as one of the essential prerequisite, trademark of each region will survive in regional, local funds of libraries and in archival materials, which will differentiate one from the others and facilitate the involvement in the national scientific research projects, in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO 2001) and the UN Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), that Serbia, by fulfilling its international obligations in the EU accession process, ratified in 2010. Regional collections and special archival collections are our cultural heritage, historical retrospective and our national identification in a global world.

1.1.1 The importance of digital technologies and the process of digitization in the educational context

Digital technologies have become an indispensable part of modern life, as is the necessity of its application in the university educational context. The impact of these technologies on learning outcomes is extremely beneficial, since they enable more efficient, effective and intense teaching. One of the main advantages is certainly easier access to learning content through digital libraries and learning management systems, which globally provide conditions for the development of the distance learning concept, as well as the possibility to have the feedback, and the opportunity for the interaction and discussion between students and professors, but also better self-management by learners themselves. While some claim that there is an insignificant relationship between computer use and improvement in student's test scores (Weaver, 2000)², others emphasize the positive aspects of the application of ICT in the educational framework (Parr & Fung, 2000³; Andrews et al. 2002⁴; Hartley, 2007⁵).

At the end of the twentieth century the attention of experts focused on digitizing collections of book and non-book materials. They were guided by two main reasons: protection of copies and availability of publications and information. Digitized form is a surrogate for the original, created with the desire to remember the current image of the document, so that the external influences could not hurt it, as well as to open, in the spatial, temporal, legal terms the use of that copy. Easy searchability and high level of informativeness are the overall qualities of the digitization. From the standpoint of digital collections' use the fact of their maximum availability during all 24 hours a day all year round and internationally is always emphasized. European Digital Library (Europeana Digital Library) and the Memory of the World (Memory of the World) are made of a set of national digitized library and archive collections.

² Weaver, GC 2000, *An examination of the National Educational Longitudinal Study Database to Probe the Correlation Between Computer Use in School and Improvement in Test Scores*, Journal of Science and Technology 9.2: 121-133.

³ Parr, JM & Fung 2000, *A review of the literature on computer-assisted learning, particularly integrated learning systems, and outcomes with respect to literacy and numeracy*, Auckland: University of Auckland. Retrieved from: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ict/5927>

⁴ Andrews R, Burn A, Leach J, Locke T, Low GD & Torgerson C 2002, *A Systematic Review of the Impact of Networked ICT on 5-16 year olds' literacy in English*. In: Research Evidence in Education Library, Issue 1, London: EPPICentre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.

⁵ Hartley, J 2007, *Teaching, learning and new technology: a review for teachers*, British Journal of Educational Technology 38.1: 42-62.

The essence of traditional archives and libraries, as well as digital ones, is an intellectual product, but it is the digital form, meticulous bibliographic data and normative file of this product that provides better and lasting duration and diffusion of it. Digital collections are based on a formal, objective, professional, but also regional, local, national principle. It is important to plan entire process of digitalization, from setting goals, selecting funds, methods, procedures and techniques, equipment, through staff training, finding sources of funding, which all lead to timely achievement of defined objectives. The lack of a plan or its inconsistency will result in a loss of money and information.

Before digitizing contents that belong to scientific and cultural heritage of one country, priorities must be determined. First requirement would be the insight into archival or library fund as an independent entity, as well as in its structure, relationship to other funds in the archive, its social role and significance. If the process of digitization is well prepared, detection, identification and retrieval of digital resources will seem simple to any user. The information must be transferred to electronic form in a regular and quality manner, equipped with appropriate indexes and consistent metadata that allows multiple searches of their contents. Cultural institutions have to cooperate in the project of digitization of the national heritage in order to properly meet expectations and requirements of this valuable process. Protection and sustainability of legibility of information, completely independent of changes in hardware and software solutions of the digitization, originality and creativity of digital databases, preservation of copyrights and satisfaction of user claims with no economic barriers, will also contribute to this.

During the meeting held in Lund in 2001⁶ regarding the implementation of framework for digitization, it was concluded that successful digitization process provides a key mechanism for the use of the unique European cultural heritage and supports cultural diversity, education, and the development of content industries. After the Lund Action Plan was defined, many countries have dedicated themselves to the process of creating a digital framework of their scientific and cultural heritage. In accordance with the guidelines articulated in this action plan and in order to answer demands of the modern age, numerous educational, scientific and cultural institutions are committing to the virtual world of knowledge.

1.1.2 Modernization of educational process and formation of future librarians, informaticians, documentalists and archivists

The Internet, as a global digital library, in addition to a variety of small private libraries, encourages and facilitates the availability of diverse information and enables automatization of knowledge, which is a phenomenon that represents both a need and a challenge of modern times. Furthermore, since nowadays librarianship education relies upon the Internet accessibility as well as on the use of modern information technologies, the status of librarianship in general within one society will primarily depend on successful formation of an educated, active, efficient, progressive, motivated, flexible and helpful librarian.

Modernization of educational process could not be unilaterally harmonized with European system, Lisbon and Bologna Declaration, without honoring national tradition and existing level of social development in our country. In inter-state contacts the question of harmonization of legislation, standards, computer equipment, and program support for librarian and archival activities is posed more often, as well as the question of means and contents of education of librarians, informaticians, documentalists and archivists, as carriers of knowledge necessary to every other scientific discipline. Library and archival activities, as well as appropriate education for these professions, were once based more on empirical cognitions, and treated as auxiliary scientific disciplines, even very often omitted from classification of sciences of competent official ministries (as is the case in Serbia for number of years) and syllabus of renowned universities. Nowadays, their contents are recognized also under the auspices of syntagma “organization of knowledge”, “knowledge management”, “information literacy”

⁶ Coordination of digitization mechanisms, April 2001, *European content in global networks, coordination mechanisms for digitization programmes*, Lund.

and they confirm “non-ephemeral” form of their contents, their everlasting significance because of inheritance of documentary, cultural, scientific, educative artifacts, as well as for their ability to adapt and answer contemporary demands of technological development, owing to which their funds and their knowledge surpass temporal and geographical coordinates within which we were exclusively moving around until recently. Bearing in mind that “the real nature of business (...) of information”⁷ (Davidow & Malone, 1992), its handling, preservation, processing and distribution became fundamental demand of every profession, logical consequence of this phenomenon is that they all turn to librarianship and archival science as master scientific disciplines that are dealing with organization of knowledge.

One example of the teaching process modernization in Serbia, which we will take the opportunity to present on this occasion, refers to archival science. Namely, archival technicians ceased to exist in Serbia with the abolishing of orientated education on the high school level, while on the university level archival science was studied solely at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade in the function of perceiving historical disciplines. Since the initiation of librarianship education at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade in 1963, and again in 1981, archival science was one of the optional subjects at the postgraduate level. The regular classes in the domains of archival science and museology at the pre-graduate, graduate (master) and PhD level started with the generation of students of 2006 enrolled at the Department of Librarianship and Information Science of the Faculty of Philology, wherewith studying the process of preservation, protection, processing, usage of overall cultural heritage and information about it, is rounded up at one place, within the framework of one syllabus. Considering the fact that the professionalization is necessary for social recognition of a discipline as the scientific one, which implies recognition of independent scientific method, appropriate academic education, creation of expert terminology, law regulations, honoring ethical codes, which were demands presented at the 14th International Congress of MAS, it could be said that all the conditions are now fulfilled in Serbia as well. According to the conclusions of the 13th International Congress of Archives “studies of archival sciences as separate discipline, which is studied in formal educational programs” are recommended and “promote the development of archival theory and practice”, with special attention paid to ethical codes in archival science, as well as in scientific work in general. And in that sense training at the Department for Librarianship and Information Science of the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade with its subject Ethics in science and culture enables actuality and interdisciplinarity of studies. The Department confirmed its dedication to this matter by organizing the international scientific conference in September 2009 with the theme *Ethics in Science and Culture*.

1.2 FORMER, CURRENT AND FUTURE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE LIBRARIANSHIP STUDIES IN SERBIA

The introduction of quality system into university education, as given in standard documents issued by the Government of Serbia, is based on research on the application of the QFD (Quality Function Deployment) method, developed in Japan, so as to increase competitiveness on the academic education market, which is centered on the student. According to the criteria proposed in this method, during the transfer of knowledge stage third most effective factor out of twenty-seven is the library stock. In spite of that, all analyses treated libraries as infrastructure and are represented solely by its stock, while forgetting the fact that the library stock is useless, without the appropriate system of cataloguing, databases, and that a well-trained librarian plays a key role in their creation and use; resulting in the fact that the librarian is very important for the instruction process. Since Serbian University Law refers to assistants and teaching assistants as associates, librarians are unjustifiably categorized as auxiliary personnel. This terminological slip-up would not be so serious if it did not imply that librarians are treated as administration staff, which relieves them from their duty to improve themselves, work of the library and the quality of studies. Therefore, the introduction of quality system

⁷ Davidow, WH, &Malone, MS 1992, *The Virtual Corporation – Structuring and Revitalizing the Corporation for the 21st Century*, New York, p.65.

must not end with librarians, but rather it should start with them, considering that without appropriate information resources teachers cannot ask their students to be more responsible during the acquisition of knowledge.

Experts involved in TQE (Total Quality Education) research emphasize that the main reasons why this method should be used are the following: changing teachers' attitudes toward the education process, identifying the factors that have a negative impact on the quality of the education process, developing university as an organization which always responds to increasingly higher demands of the labor market. We can identify continuous and radical improvements in the process of reorganizing all levels of education. These radical improvements can be seen in automatization of working processes whereas continuous improvement depends on new technologies, which enable using databases, Internet and intranet; it also depends on librarians' expertise and enthusiasm and their readiness to cooperate with teachers and students and to deal with new technologies.

At the same time, there are attempts to establish a USG Library Alumni Association (LAA) in Serbia, which would enable better and more organized mutual networking, establishing relationship and cooperation with the U.S. as well as regional counterparts, and would facilitate the applying of U.S. library and information science standards and practices. Simultaneously, through its programs and activities, such an association would boost the professional development of the alumni that would contribute to a better-informed society and support its democratic advancement. The LAA would be expected to promote and support democracy, public-private sector partnerships and civil society through its activities and by fostering continued building of information sharing, communication and collaboration amongst alumni of academic and professional exchange program audiences. Via its cooperation with more than 300 members of the Fulbright Alumni Association in Serbia (gathering all USG exchange program grantees, not only Fulbrighters), the LAA would try to bring modern Global Information Infrastructure, information trends and services to various fields of Serbian economic, political, cultural, and other activities of the society. They would be able to spread, especially amongst librarians and schoolteachers, innovative contents, methods and materials of teaching, focusing on U.S. experience and principles. They would aim to spread the idea of the communication without borders in journalism, teaching process, Internet usage, as well as to try to minimize the information gap in the regions characterized by high unemployment amongst young people, economic and multi-ethnic challenges.

For countries in transition such as Serbia, open and easy access to new ideas, techniques, legal frameworks, philosophies and economic models are of utmost importance. Through the LAA, modern American library trends, marketing, promotion, budgeting, digitalization, reference services, library networking, would be brought into the Serbian library and information science theory and practice. The promoting of American library policies and practices in improving the quality of library services and operations in Serbia, would eventually lead to the modernization of library/information science functions in Serbia and greater access to information. This would ultimately contribute to the faster development of a modern, stable democratic society in Serbia, as well as facilitate a faster process of its joining/applying the advanced international community democratic values and policies.

1.2.1 Several key issues and positive assumptions that could lead to the improvement of librarianship studies in Serbia

Serbian libraries should rise to the level of an efficient leader, manager, coordinator, integrator, provider of information in its area, regardless of whether it is a municipality, state, school or university library. The satisfaction of library members should always be a priority. In order to achieve this, library members should become partners in a process of turning libraries into local library information centers. Using statistical methods in analyzing readers needs in terms of current or potential library stock and information, in analyzing the quantity of staff and their qualification regarding the profile, tasks and purpose of the library and in estimating financial involvement, demographic acceptance and usefulness to society will provide clear and precise indicators and help startup changes. The ultimate goal of this process is not library management, but knowledge management, whose aim is to broaden

the clients' scope of mind and thus point to better opportunities for education and getting new information. Therefore, the quantification of all units does not provide a complex view of the problem or its completeness; it simply provides a better understanding of the structure, working procedures, users' needs, whereas the real contribution of libraries to knowledge management remains vague in quality analyses, which can be subjective, and therefore cannot be and are not standardized. Even a direct relation between investments, stock and services do not imply that we can find correct parameters for getting the whole picture of all library functions.

Considering the fact that Serbian libraries and schools depend on our social environment, we cannot compare them with Russian or American libraries and schools and their experiences in that regard. We have in mind that a teacher can never be more important than his students and that the management and marketing of libraries are not more important than libraries themselves, librarians and clients. Both library members and librarians will be all the more satisfied if the space where their intellectual curiosity wanders surpasses the borders of their local library or a geographically-confined library information system, to which digitalization, successful management and appropriate library marketing can contribute a lot.

Striving to develop new curricula that could be implemented at our Department for Librarianship and Information Science at all levels of study, we have recognized several key issues in Serbia that need to be addressed and they are as follows: undefined status of Librarian Science as a branch of science, which is studied at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level, bearing in mind that it is not listed in the documents of the Serbian Ministry of Science; the necessity of inclusion of library and library information periodicals in the national citation list; overall need for the increased level of professionalization of librarianship to parry the current state of affairs in which opting to work in a library does not depend on one's skills and knowledge; problems of insufficient funding and haphazard automatization of libraries, etc.

However, there are some positive assumptions that could lead to the improvement of the current state of affairs in Serbia and they include following: reform of education; setting up a Library Committee in the Ministry of Culture, which is in charge of giving financial support to library projects; introduction of young educated professionals; organizing conferences, seminars, conventions etc. so as to promote continuous education; support from the Ministry of Science to provide databases and e-periodicals and from the Ministry of Culture to form a virtual library.

1.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY TO THE MODERNIZATION OF LIBRARIANSHIP STUDIES IN SERBIA

By comparing working conditions, syllabuses and methodologies of education and research with those at European and American universities with which we have already established co-operation by organizing eight international conferences and common projects, we have come to the following conclusions:

1. That both teachers and students want modernized instruction.
2. That we need the necessary equipment and contemporary readings if we want to achieve that idea.

As part of the effort to meet the requirements of modern librarianship and library practice, the Faculty of Philology, has developed, in accordance with the Bologna principles among others, a new curriculum, whose flexible contents and possibilities to combine courses according to the needs of students enable even higher compatibility with the labor market demands. In addition to that and striving to improve current status of library science in Serbia we have already organized ten international conferences dealing with contemporary issues related to this scientific field: *Education of Librarians; Cooperation of National Libraries; System of Quality in Libraries; Intellectual Freedom and Modern Libraries* (dealing with the following topics: The Freedom of Access to Knowledge and Information; The Risk of the Freedom of Access to Information; Censorship and Self-Censorship; Social Responsibility of Libraries in the Making of a Free Democratic Civil Environment; An Ethical Code as an Institution of Intellectual Freedom Protection in Libraries); *Economic Role of Libraries in*

Modern Society; Leadership in Libraries: Joining Aspects of Culture, Science and Economy; Electronic Library; Children and Libraries; Ethics in Culture and Science and most recently *Digitization of Cultural Heritage, University Repositories and Distance Learning*. These Conferences were organized by the Faculty of Philology in cooperation with Emporia University, (Kansas), North Carolina University (Chapel Hill), Hacettepe University (Ankara), Royal School for Library Science (Copenhagen) and Chuo University, etc.

This year the Faculty of Philology will organize the international scientific conference *Digital Libraries and Digital Archives* which will also deal with relevant issues in regards to library science. The focus of this conference will be to emphasize the exceptional role of digital libraries and digital archives and the great importance of ICT in modern society for science, culture and education and society as a whole, as well as to encourage development in this area. In the presence of distinguished researchers and general public some of the key topics, which make the necessary basis for the development of the information society, will be initiated: copyright; intellectual property protection; digitization of valuable books and unpublished scientific papers; importance of digitalization for the development of science, culture and education; standardization and quality control of digitization; distance learning, etc. The conference organizers are the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade, the University of Novi Sad, the University Library "Svetozar Markovic", with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Ministry of Culture and Information. Bearing in mind that the digitization process has launched important and sensitive questions in these fields, we have designed this conference as a platform for dialogue and discussion on these very important issues. By presenting the importance and benefits, as well as multiple advantages and various opportunities that ICT offer to culture, science and education – we are hoping that this conference will contribute to the popularization of the use of new technologies for the purposes of preservation, presentation and promotion of Serbian science, culture and heritage.

The process of reforming elementary, primary or higher education would be continuous during the whole semester and periodic (through examinations, term papers, quizzes, tests). Same work models would lead to student and teacher exchange between our and foreign universities, who are our partners in making progress. The Library and Information Science Department of the Faculty of Philology has signed a co-operation agreement with Emporia University in Kansas and the University of Sofia; the main focus of the agreement with the latter is student and teacher exchange, which will encourage intellectual curiosity and moral responsibility of every participant in this process and will contribute to the evaluation and validation of our diplomas further afield. Apart from apparent elements, such as formal knowledge and skills, we also intend to encourage and make use of our informal knowledge defined by our interests, abilities and preferences, which are often ignored in traditional schooling system, and this should be encouraged by student group work and peer counseling, with the teacher acting as a mentor, so as to quickly and successfully approach expert society educational model. It rests primarily on distance learning and searching for information on the Internet instead of using libraries.

CONCLUSIONS

Serbian libraries have achieved a satisfactory level regarding the artistic and scientific levels and scope of their stock, qualification and qualities of employees, but they are still beyond notice of society and do not arouse readers' interest. What do they lack? They lack more ambition, because increasing demands placed by libraries themselves help users to grow accustomed to libraries being up-to-date and able to adapt to their needs and changes. If they do it suddenly, the power of knowledge they possess will be dwarfed by the power of technology and will repel some users. If they do it too slowly and with a lack of interest, they will seem irresponsible and will lag behind modern achievements for a couple of years. Deciding upon the approach, pace, way or gradual introduction of changes will depend on resolve and being moderate at the same time, on enterprise and collective spirit as well as on high working and intellectual capacities, predictability, ability to motivate employees and their communication skills. One would say we cannot argue about these qualities – both theoretically and empirically, they are always desirable and that the co-operation between friendly and experienced

cultural, scientific and educational institutions is essential. It was our intention to indicate, throughout this paper, the current state of library science in Serbia, problems encountered when developing new curricula and positive assumptions that could lead to the improvement of the current state within this scientific field, as well as to emphasize that the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade will continue to strive to improve librarianship studies in Serbia.

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