

2014

Library and Information Science Abstracts

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on Library and Information
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4-7 Aug 2014, Athens, Greece

Edited by Gregory T. Papanikos

THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

(In Alphabetical Order by Author's Family name)

	Preface	7
	Conference Program	9
1	Academic and Professional Needs of Professors Belonging to Disadvantaged <i>Jyoti Bhabal</i>	12
2	Information Policies, EU Library Legislation, Good Practices <i>Iuliana Botezan</i>	13
3	The Challenges of New Technologies for Information Professionals <i>Miriam Vieira da Cunha</i>	14
4	Cyberbullying a Desecration of Information Ethics: Perceptions of Students in Kwa-Zulu Natal High Schools <i>Luyanda Dube & Siphamandla Ncube</i>	15
5	Engaging Gen Z through Service Innovations in an Arts School Library <i>Soo Chin Foo</i>	16
6	Tag-based Personalized Recommender Systems in Social Resources Sharing Websites <i>Cheng-Lung Huang</i>	17
7	A Patent Document Category System by Using Stanford Parser and Rough Set Theory <i>Wen-Chen Huang</i>	18
8	Nature of Information Seeking Behavior of Teachers Engaged in General Degree Colleges and Teachers' Training Colleges: A Critical Analysis <i>Dipak Kumar Kundu</i>	19
9	A New Automatic Document Classification System using Google N-gram <i>Hsiu-Pi Lin</i>	20
10	The Role of Academic Libraries in Facilitating Access to Digital Information in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century <i>Ezra Ondari-Okemwa</i>	21
11	The Role of Open Access Resources in University Library Collection Development <i>Lan Shen</i>	22
12	The "Paradigm Shift" of Italian LIS: the Impact of Social Librarianship and Evolution Activities <i>Giovanni Solimine</i>	23
13	Managing Access to the Internet in Public Libraries in the UK - The Findings of the MAIPLE Project <i>Rachel Spacey</i>	24

14	Decision Improvement within an e-business by Using Dynamic KPIs <i>Irina-Steliana Stan & Ion-Sorin Stroe</i>	25
15	Universal Access to Digital Libraries: Understanding Accessibility Problems of Blind Users <i>Iris Xie, Rakesh Babu, Soohyung Joo & Paige Fuller</i>	26

Preface

This abstract book includes all the abstracts of the papers presented at the *Annual International Conference on Library and Information Science 4-7 Aug 2014*, organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research. In total there were 15 papers and 17 presenters, coming from 11 different countries (Brazil, India, Italy, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, UK and USA). The conference was organized into V sessions that included areas of Social Policy, Services, Information Technology and other related fields. As it is the publication policy of the Institute, the papers presented in this conference will be considered for publication in one of the books of ATINER.

The Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world could meet in Athens and exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study. Our mission is to make ATHENS a place where academics and researchers from all over the world meet to discuss the developments of their discipline and present their work. To serve this purpose, conferences are organized along the lines of well established and well defined scientific disciplines. In addition, interdisciplinary conferences are also organized because they serve the mission statement of the Institute. Since 1995, ATINER has organized more than 150 international conferences and has published over 100 books. Academically, the Institute is organized into four research divisions and nineteen research units. Each research unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committee and most importantly the administration staff of ATINER for putting this conference together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
Annual International Conference on Library and Information Science, 4-7 August
2014, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

**Conference Venue: [St George Lycabettus](#), 2 Kleomenous Street, 10675 Kolonaki,
[Athens, Greece](#).**

ORGANIZING AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

1. Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.
2. Dr. George Poulos, Vice-President of Research, ATINER & Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa.
3. Dr. Nicholas Pappas, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, ATINER & Professor, Sam Houston University, USA.
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6. Dr. Dan Albertson, Academic Member, ATINER & Associate Professor, University of Alabama, USA.
7. Dr. David Philip Wick, Director, Arts and Humanities Research Division, ATINER & Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.
8. Dr. Mert Uydaci, Director, [Human Development Research Division](#), ATINER & Professor, Marmara University, Turkey.
9. Dr. Ioannis Stivachtis, Director, [Social Sciences Research Division](#), ATINER & Director, Int'l Studies Program Virginia Tech-Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, USA.
10. Dr. Michael P. Malloy, Director, [Business and Law Research Division](#), ATINER & Distinguished Professor, McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, USA.
11. Dr. Nicholas N. Patricios, Director, Engineering & Architecture Research Division, ATINER & Professor & Dean Emeritus, School of Architecture, University of Miami, USA.

Administration

Fani Balaska, Stavroula Kiritsi, Eirini Lentzou, Konstantinos Manolidis, Katerina Maraki, Celia Sakka, Konstantinos Spiropoulos & Ioanna Trafali

C O N F E R E N C E P R O G R A M

(The time for each session includes at least 10 minutes coffee break)

Monday 4 August 2014

09:30-10:00 Registration

10:00-10:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.
- Dr. George Poulos, Vice-President of Research, ATINER & Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa.

10:30-12:00 Session I: Social Policy

Chair: George Poulos, Vice-President of Research, ATINER & Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa.

1. Giovanni Solimine, Professor, University of Rome "La Sapienza", Italy. The "Paradigm Shift" of Italian LIS. The Impact of Social Librarianship and Evaluation Activities.
2. Iuliana Botezan, Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. Information Policies, EU Library Legislation, Good Practices.
3. Rachel Spacey, Researcher, Loughborough University, UK. Managing Access to the Internet in Public Libraries in the UK – the Findings of the MAIPLE Project.
4. Luyande Dube, Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa & Siphamandla Ncube, Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa. Cyber Bullying a Desecration of Information Ethics: Perceptions of Students in Kwa-Zulu Natal High Schools.

12:00-13:30 Session II: Information Services and Access I

Chair: Iuliana Botezan, Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.

1. Miriam Vieira da Cunha, Professor, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil. The Challenges of New Technologies for Information Professionals.
2. Soo Chin Foo, Manager, School of the Arts, Singapore. Engaging Gen Z through Service Innovations in an Arts School Library.
3. Irina-Steliana Stan, Ph.D. Student, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania & Ion-Sorin Stroe, Ph.D., The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania. Decision Improvement within an e-business by Using Dynamic KPIs.

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 Session III: Users Needs and Behavior

Chair: Luyande Dube, Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa.

1. Ezra Ondari-Okemwa, Professor, University of Fort Hare, South Africa. The Role of Academic Libraries in Facilitating Access to Digital Information in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century.
2. Jyoti Bhabal, Senior Assistant Professor, SNDT Women's University, India. Academic and Professional Needs of Professors Belonging to Disadvantaged.
3. Dipak Kumar Kundu, Librarian, Satyapriya Roy College of Education, India. Nature of Information Seeking Behavior of Teachers Engaged in General Degree Colleges and Teachers' Training Colleges: A Critical Analysis. (Monday 4 of August).

21:00-23:00 Greek Night and Dinner (Details during registration)

Tuesday 5 August 2014

09:30-11:00 Session IV: Information Technology and Systems

Chair: Rachel Spacey, Researcher, Loughborough University, UK.

1. Cheng-Lung Huang, Professor, National Kaohsiung First University, Taiwan. Tag-Based Personalized Recommender Systems in Social Resources Sharing Websites.
2. Wen-Chen Huang, Associate Professor, National Kaohsiung First University of Science & Technology, Taiwan. A Patent Document Category System by Using Stanford Parser and Rough Set Theory.
3. Hsiu-Pi Lin, Assistant Professor, Chia Nan University, Taiwan. A New Automatic Document Classification System using Google N-gram.

11:00-12:30 Session V: Information Services and Access II

Chair: Cheng-Lung Huang, Professor, National Kaohsiung First University, Taiwan.

1. Iris Xie, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA, Rakesh Babu, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA, Soohyung Joo, Researcher, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA & Paige Fuller, Research Assistant, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA. Universal Access to Digital Libraries: Understanding Accessibility Problems of Blind Users.
2. Lan Shen, Associate Professor, Purdue University Calumet, USA. The Role of Open Access Resources in University Library Collection Development. (Tuesday 5 of August).

12:30-13:30 Lunch

17:30-20:30 Urban Walk (Details during registration)

21:00-22:00 Dinner (Details during registration)

Wednesday 6 August 2014

Cruise: (Details during registration)

Thursday 7 August 2014

Delphi Visit: (Details during registration)

Jyoti Bhabal

Senior Assistant Professor, SNTD Women's University, India

Academic and Professional Needs of Professors Belonging to Disadvantaged

Since ancient time large population of India suffered due to caste system. Lower caste people were denied in many aspects including right of education. The Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) were the most deprived community among them. Government and other organizations have issued various schemes and policies to empower these communities. Subsequently the literacy level of SCs and STs has risen a bit today; however their social, cultural, economical and educational environment is still weak. Most of SC/ ST professors are behind in their professional career.

The research was undertaken to identify various academic and professional information needs of SC/ ST professors and to categories different information sources that were used by these professors to satisfy these needs.

About 200 Asst. professors and Professors belonging to SC/ ST communities were surveyed using questionnaire tool. Interviews and observations were also helpful to understand information needs of professors of this disadvantage group. The study was conducted with two cities namely Mumbai and Pune.

The study is concentrated on the three aspects of the academic and professional needs of the SC/ ST professors namely 1) Teaching and Related Activities 2) Research and Publications and 3) Career Advancement. To satisfy these needs different formal and informal information sources were used by the professors.

The study illustrated the use of each source of information. The Data collected was summarized in the form of scores. The scores indicated that research was one area of high level of information requirement. The second area was application of ICT. It was followed by the information need about rules and regulation and soft skills. These areas require immediate attention of the SC/ ST professors.

Iuliana Botezan

Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

Information Policies, EU Library Legislation, Good Practices

In the development (definition, execution and monitoring) of information policies three elements intervene: public sector bodies, users and information and documentation professionals. The legislation (derived from the first of the mentioned elements) is the basic pillar for the correct generation of information and documentation policies. This is the main reason why we consider essential to analyse the library legislation for every UE member state as to detect the differences according to the reality of each country. This would also enable to show good practices in the subject. This paper proposes a comparison between library legislation across the EU, a territory so diverse in historic, cultural and educational development.

Miriam Vieira da Cunha

Professor, University Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil

The Challenges of New Technologies for Information Professionals

This paper intends to reflect about the changes in the work of information professionals. We are, according to Baudrillard (1991), living "in a universe with ever more information and ever less meaning". In this universe, reality may be understood through the numerous social, economic, and political dimensions that modify human knowledge and action. This movement has led to the rise of new occupations, the transformation of others and the destruction of many. It has also meant that fields that were previously distinct, such as specific work areas in a professional category, are now converging. Technologies change work situations and machines perform routine tasks. It is clear that the group of information professionals is a very heterogeneous one. Nowadays, the ability to work more efficiently entails the use of technology, and requires individuals to be effective participants in the information society. What we are actually seeing is not a change in knowledge, but a change in the object of information professionals' work – information and its processes. One of the various challenges faced by information professionals regarding technologies is that of visibility, and the openness of net information services. While in general, everything is on the net, sometimes users lose track of it. Understanding user behaviour and their needs, and providing the skills necessary to seek information is a basic requirement for information professionals. Everything suggests that the fundamental values of information professions will continue as they are for at least the next few years: values associated with quality services, universal access and cooperation. This all leads to believe that the intelligent use of technologies by information professionals will feed this circle of change and of knowledge sharing.

Luyanda Dube

Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa
&

Siphamandla Ncube

Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa

Cyberbullying a Desecration of Information Ethics: Perceptions of Students in Kwa-Zulu Natal High Schools

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology devices such as cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as facebook and twitter. Cyberbullying is when a minor, is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child. Given that cyberbullying entails defamation or spreading false information or portfolios about someone, it is regarded as a violation of the ethical code of information use. The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions, experiences and challenges of high school learners with regard to cyberbullying. This is a qualitative study that used focus group interviews in high schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa. The findings attest that children recognize that cyberbullying might have detrimental effects on victims such as alcohol and drugs abuse, low self-esteem, high level of absenteeism, poor grades as well depression and suicidal thoughts. The study recommends that parents need to take cognisance of the probable dangers of the various technologies so that they could be instrumental in educating their children about children cyberbullying. Further, the schools as well as the Department of Education can play a fundamental role in educating children about cyberbullying as well as cyber ethics.

Soo Chin Foo

Manager, School of the Arts, Singapore

Engaging Gen Z through Service Innovations in an Arts School Library

The future of libraries in today's Internet age is very much connected to the information needs of their users. It no longer centers on the physical space in which it houses its collection. Instead, libraries should look at tapping on service innovations and e-Resources.

Existing literature on this topic may not have fully explored the role that service innovations play in supporting knowledge sharing and learning, in the context of specialized school libraries for young adults. This presentation explores the development of knowledge sharing through service innovations, to raise awareness of library and information services at the School of the Arts (SOTA), a pre-tertiary independent specialized arts school that offers the International Baccalaureate curriculum in Singapore.

At SOTA, the library leverages on Internet and technology for new services to share knowledge, such as new arrivals alert service, user education, information literacy programmes, subscription of specialized arts databases and access to a range of e-Resources for research. In addition to the provision of computers with Internet access, the library had enhanced the learning experience of its users with new infrastructure like scanner, photocopier and printer.

The research incorporates empirical study, survey, focus group and observations in promoting the meaningful utilization of library resources. By rethinking service concepts and working closely with faculty and students to better understand what is crucial to their information needs, the library moves towards the direction of a user-centric approach that underscores its relevance in the school community.

Cheng-Lung Huang

Professor, National Kaohsiung First University, Taiwan

Tag-based Personalized Recommender Systems in Social Resources Sharing Websites

The social resources sharing websites are modern tools for storing, sharing, and managing the knowledge in the Internet. People collect and tag the internet resources they are interested, and share the resources to others in the platform. As a platform of the personal knowledge management system (PKM), it provides capabilities for the collection, compilation and organization of knowledge and information. Additionally, the platform provides collaboration for any group like class, team, or company.

In the web-based platform, users upload their resources, and label them with arbitrary tags. Users, resource items, and tags are three important roles in this kind of systems. Users label the resource item using social tags. These systems can be categorized according to what kinds of resources are supported, such as bookmarks, bibliographic references, photos, merchandise, or video.

The tags owned by the user represent the user's personal interests. In the social tagging system, the newly tagged items by the user are more relevant to the user's current interests than older items. Based on the tag-based interest, a recommender system can suggest resource items to the user. Recommender systems are developed to deal with information overload and provide personalized content and services to users.

This study proposes a recommender system that considers the users' recent tag information. We collect user's social networks information, analyze the frequency and recency of users' tag-based preference; and then recommend the similar items to target user via Bayes probability model. The performances of the proposed system were examined and demonstrated using datasets from famous social bookmarking websites. The experimental results showed that the proposed recommender system can successfully suggest social resource items to user based on the user's tag-based preferences.

The contributions of this study are: (1) the incorporation of the frequency and recency of personal interests, (2) the collaboration of the social network, and (3) combination of the personal and the similar social neighbors' interest into the Bayes probability model. The proposed model can be adapted in application areas of tagging, such as books, articles, documents, pictures, audio and video.

Wen-Chen Huang

Associate Professor, National Kaohsiung First University of Science
& Technology, Taiwan

A Patent Document Category System by Using Stanford Parser and Rough Set Theory

According to the reports of World Intellectual Property Indicators, the number of applying documents for global patent has two million and three hundred fifty thousand in 2012. The growing is fastest in the fastest in the last years.

Therefore, Global Intellectual Property Office has huge number of documents. For patent document classification, manually review is not only slow but also costly. This research aims to have an efficient approach for automatic patent document classification.

In this study, we use WIPO-alpha database from World Intellectual Property Organization for two experiments, the first one is to combine Stanford Parser and Rough Set Theory to build for a N-gram noun phrase extraction algorithm. The second experiment is to combine Stop Words and Rough Set Theory to build a keyword extraction algorithm.

Experimental results show that the average F1 value for the proposed method is 98.5%, which is higher than traditional methods.

Dipak Kumar Kundu

Librarian, Satyapriya Roy College of Education, India

Nature of Information Seeking Behavior of Teachers Engaged in General Degree Colleges and Teachers' Training Colleges: A Critical Analysis

The nature of purpose of information seeking and behavioural pattern of the teachers engaged in General Degree Colleges and Teachers' Training Colleges has been critically analysed in the present study. This study is based on 408 teachers in affiliated colleges of West Bengal State University, India consisting of 376 in General Degree Colleges (GDCs) and 32 Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs). The feedback collected from the respondents has been analysed and interpreted. The changed attitudes have been obtained in the present ICT environment. The study reveals that the teachers still now depend mainly on print document but a change is taking place in the academic community. They also seek information through electronic documents and audio-visual materials. The various purposes for seeking information have been found out. This work indicates that the Teachers in Training Colleges seek more information through electronic documents than the teachers in General Degree Colleges. The variances in the use of sources by the teachers in GDCs and TTCs have been obtained. The study also reveals that teachers in both types of colleges must need software training to get the information through internet and electronic documents. The capabilities of using computer and searching information through internet among the teachers have also been found. The role of college libraries has been evaluated. This paper shows that the central role of the library profession remains the same, but methods and tools used for information storage and retrieval continue to grow and change dramatically.

Hsiu-Pi Lin

Assistant Professor, Chia Nan University, Taiwan

A New Automatic Document Classification System using Google N-gram

This study proposes the N-gram segmentation algorithm (NSA) to address the problem of retrieving static keywords. The NSA method combines stop words, stemming, N-gram choosing, and the Google N-gram corpus. The proposed method fetches meaningful N-gram keywords using the NSA method. In addition to keyword extraction methods, this study also proposes a new keyword weighting method that uses Google N-gram frequency as a weight for term frequency. This method enhances the weighting mechanism for keyword extraction in a particular group.

The proposed method uses the probability-based term frequency and inverse category frequency (PTFICF) to weight the keywords in documents. Finally, this approach uses SVM to classify the test documents. This study presents three experiments: Experiment 1 used Classic4 as a balanced data set, and experimental results show a F₁value of 96.4%. Experiment 2 used Reuter-21578 as an imbalanced data set, and experimental results show a F₁Value of 78.7%. Experiment 3 used the Google frequency as a weighting method, and experimental results demonstrate that a higher Google frequency produces more accurate classification results. The proposed methods are more accurate than traditional methods, and reduce the training time by 90%.

Ezra Ondari-Okemwa
Head, University of Fort Hare, South Africa

The Role of Academic Libraries in Facilitating Access to Digital Information in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century

This paper explores the role that academic libraries in sub-Saharan Africa may play in facilitating access to digital information in the 21st century. The proliferation of digital information may be seen as part of the evolution, revolution, or crisis in scholarly communication in the 21st century. For long, academic libraries have been known to facilitate access to printed information. However, more information is now digitally available than ever and academic libraries are expected to be in the forefront of facilitating access to such information to those involved in scholarly communication. The paper also discusses the concepts of Global Information Infrastructure (GII) and digital librarianship in the context of the sub-Saharan Africa region. The broad objectives of the paper include identifying the opportunities and challenges which academic libraries in sub-Saharan Africa face facilitating access to digital information in the 21st century; finding out the extent to which academic libraries in sub-Saharan Africa have embraced digital librarianship; establishing the relevance of digital information in the context of scholarly communication in sub-Saharan Africa; outline the role of technologies of information in enabling academic libraries in sub-Saharan Africa to facilitate access to digital information; and identify the necessary skills required by academic library personnel in sub-Saharan Africa for effective facilitation of access to digital information. A comprehensive literature review will be conducted to explore the role a global digital library might play in providing network access to information within a GII-based on current and emerging paradigms in the information sciences and information service professions. The paper will give particular attention to the concepts of system usability and content usefulness as well as content relevance in the sub-Saharan context. The paper will also look at the adequacy and/or inadequacy of skills of academic library personnel in sub-Saharan Africa in facilitating access to digital information. Conclusions will be drawn based on the observations of the studies reviewed within the conceptual framework to be discussed with emphasis on the role of academic libraries in facilitating access to digital information in the sub-Saharan Africa region.

Lan Shen

Associate Professor, Purdue University Calumet, USA

The Role of Open Access Resources in University Library Collection Development

Academic libraries in the U.S. have witnessed the impressive growth of collecting open access resources as part of collection development. This paper conducts intensive survey and empirical interviews reporting open access policies and practices in 200 academic libraries in the U.S. The survey demonstrates the current quantitative status of open access collection, summarize librarians' perceptions about open access, illustrate obstacles and restrictions on collecting open access information, and analyze models and standardized practice for collection development on open access. In addition, based on the empirical survey and interview data, the paper addresses the advantages and opportunities of including open access in the collection development and management while assessing patrons' demands and internet supplies of open access resources. Furthermore, the paper discusses the challenges and obstacles of facilitating access to open access resources in the context of collection development and acquisitions, focusing on the conflicts and dysfunctions of the traditional publications and new open access resources. Finally, the paper proposes various alternatives and suggestions for the directions of collecting open access resources, including 1) changing collection development policies; 2) finding, selecting, evaluating and posting open access resources; 3) collaborating with other libraries; and 4) addressing possible copy rights issues.

Giovanni Solimine

Professor, University of Rome "La Sapienza", Italy

The “Paradigm Shift” of Italian LIS: the Impact of Social Librarianship and Evolution Activities

A paradigm shift (or revolutionary science) is, according to Thomas Kuhn, in his influential book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962), a change in the basic assumptions, or paradigms within the ruling theory of science. Kuhn used the term “paradigm” to denote a set of theories and methodologies universally accepted by a scientific community, the practices that define a scientific discipline at a certain point in time, until “scientific revolutions” emerge. Following Kuhn’s approach, we can say that Italian librarianship is living a “paradigm shift”.

We call the new step of discipline “Social Librarianship”, that deals with the library as a complex social system made by people for people, a natural development of the previous visions of librarianship understood as service management and document management.

Social Librarianship provides useful tools to preserve and, at the same time, reinterpret the specific role of libraries, enhancing their vision while accepting the possibility of institutional mission’s development, coherently with the present social transformations. In this way libraries reflect the spirit of our present time.

The paper examines this change analysing the contextual elements, the objects of study and methods of social librarianship, highlighting outcomes in definition of a new strategic role for both public libraries and research libraries. In reference to some studies actually in progress, the paper presents some examples about transformation of librarianship concept of “evaluation”.

In public libraries, going over service’s effectiveness, assessment is related to their perceived positioning in a given social context. Evaluation activities measure the effect of public libraries’ actions to promote social cohesion through innovative forms of participation, production and cultural expression.

In academic libraries evaluation is expressed through a) the unique contribution of librarianship to the development of bibliometrics, b) the development of rigorous criteria for research evaluation in accordance with the characteristics of different fields of knowledge; c) ultimately, the development of the research policy.

Rachel Spacey
Researcher, Loughborough University, UK

Managing Access to the Internet in Public Libraries in the UK – The Findings of the MAIPLE Project

One of the key purposes of the public library is to provide access to information (UNESCO, 1994). In the UK, information is provided in printed formats and for the last decade via public access Internet workstations installed as part of the People's Network initiative. Recent figures reveal that UK public libraries provide approximately 40,000 computer terminals offering users around 80,000 hours across more than 4,000 service points (CIPFA, 2012). In addition, increasing numbers of public libraries allow users to connect devices such as tablets or smart phones to the Internet via a wireless network access point (Wi-Fi). How do public library staff manage this? What about users viewing harmful or illegal content? And what are the implications for a profession committed to freedom of access to information and opposition to censorship?

MAIPLE, a two-year project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council has been investigating this issue as little was known about how UK public libraries manage Internet content control including illegal material. MAIPLE has drawn on an extensive review of the literature, an online survey to which all UK public library services were invited to participate (39 per cent response rate) and case studies with five services (two in England, one in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland) to examine the ways these issues are managed and their implications for staff.

This presentation will explore the prevalence of tools such as filtering software, Acceptable Use Policies, user authentication, booking software and visual monitoring by staff and consider their efficacy and desirability in the provision of public Internet access. It will consider the professional dilemmas inherent within managing content and access. Finally, it will highlight some of the more important themes emerging from the findings and their implications for practitioners and policy makers.

CIPFA (2012) Public library statistics. 2012-2013 Estimates and 2011-2012 Actuals. London: The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

UNESCO (1994) UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html> (accessed 17 December 2013).

Irina-Steliana Stan

Ph.D. Student, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania
&

Ion-Sorin Stroe

Ph.D. Student, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

**Decision Improvement within an e-business by
Using Dynamic KPIs**

Iris Xie, Professor

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

Rakesh Babu

Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

Soohyung Joo

Researcher, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

&

Paige Fuller

Research Assistant, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

Universal Access to Digital Libraries: Understanding Accessibility Problems of Blind Users

The increasing adoption of digital libraries (DLs) threatens to marginalize millions of blind users. This is primarily due to the accessibility problems presented by the sight-centered design of DLs. The blind comprise an atypical user group that interacts with information systems non-visually through screen-reader (SR) software. Accessibility allows SR access to all system features and functions. Literature recognizes that DL access via SR software is problematic but does not clarify where and why blind users face problems. Without a clear understanding of the problem, we cannot ensure effective DL access for the blind.

This paper reports the findings of an exploratory field study to understand where and how blind users face accessibility problems in DL interactions. Fifteen blind adults with 3+ years of experience using the Internet via SR were recruited as research participants. They performed three search tasks--known-item search, specific information search, and exploratory search--using the American Memory Digital Collections (AMDC). Multiple methods consisting of pre-task questionnaires, pre-task interviews, think-aloud protocols, log analysis, and post-task interviews were employed to collect data. Data were analyzed using an open coding method where unstructured data were qualitatively examined and categorized. Analysis identified a multitude of accessibility problems that participants faced in performing the 3 search tasks in the AMDC. These problems fell into five broad problem types in relation to: (1) accessing DL documents in different formats; (2) accessing different DL functions; (3) identifying current location and path traversed within DL; (4) recognizing errors in DL search; and (5) perceiving available DL feedback. Based on these findings, design implications that will solve blind users' accessibility problems in interacting with digital libraries are discussed.