



ENTITLE Final Conference: Workshop 3

Library 2.0

Libraries, literacy and learning in the knowledge society workshop discussion

Moderators: Cedric Farrugia, AcrossLimuts and Breda Karun, NUK

8 Participants from Malta, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Austria and Bulgaria

Some starting points:

»Public libraries have the duty to help to **reduce today's digital divide** that may become tomorrow's 'info –exclusion'. As technologies evolve, making sure that the benefits of high-speed networks are available in rural as well as urban areas is becoming a policy priority. There are **different uses and practices of ICT technologies and services** provided by public libraries. The provision of ICT facilities and other web technologies without a good **community education programme** would not succeed. To gain the best results, apart from providing the ICT web facilities, one has to provide training in their use. Moreover, one must help European citizens understand **why ICT is useful in everyday lives**.«

The discussion was focused on the following questions:

1. How can libraries be active in making citizens understand the usefulness of ICT?

- *who else does this?*
- *is there any co-operation?*
- *what about non-users? How to reach them?*

Training sessions are usually organised for specific target groups.

It is quite simple to invite users (through web site, leaflets in the library...), but more difficult to reach non-users. So libraries use mass media, public places like shops, medical institutions etc.

The ICT training should not be only about access to information, but more widely about 'good use of the internet' and 'how to be creative on the internet'.

Usually libraries provide training by themselves, but in the case of special groups of users with special needs, they cooperate with other organisations.

2. What kind of training libraries provide?

- *do they charge for training? Do they get any financial contribution by municipality/region/state?*
- *is it co-ordinated on the local/regional/national level?*

There are variety of skills thought in libraries: access to information(most commonly), browsing the internet, use of e-mail, digital photography, installation of software, e-banking, e-health etc.

The most common focus groups are the elderly. Many of them are already library users, but libraries also reach them also through their organisations, such as the third life period university, associations for pensioners etc. They mostly need internet to communicate with their families or use e-government services.

Youth groups are more difficult to reach. They are very skilled on the use of internet and most of them are members of social networks. Usually their skills are better than librarians', so in a way librarians feel uncomfortable. Librarians are still very traditional and need more knowledge to be self-esteemed to deal with young users.

Students need librarians' help to learn how to use databases.

There are different situations in countries and libraries regarding co-operation with other institutions.

The financing of ICT training in libraries is based on different sources: municipalities, libraries by themselves, non-commercial fee, government programs etc.

3. What happens after training?

- *do users use computers in libraries or from home?*
- *do they need permanent help?*

Most users, especially students, use computers in the libraries permanently, because of the access to databases.

There are still many people without access to internet, so they use libraries' infrastructure. Older people also prefer to go to the library, because they don't need to deal with technology at home.

4. Can Virtual space replace Real space?

- *Can libraries maximise their services online?*
- *How can technologies compensate?*

Virtual and physical space of the library should be balanced and complementary. There is no fear that the physical library would disappear.

Modern library - Library 2.0 is the combination of physical space where the social interaction takes place and virtual space with user-friendly services.

5. Access

- *How can libraries 2.0 bridge the gap to knowledge accesibility?*

Libraries have tried to place some web 2.0 tools to their web sites, i.e. blogs, but it seems users don't wish to access them through the library web site. So it should be opposite – libraries have to go where users are, like YouTube, Flickr, Twitter...

The training tool '23 Things' has not been used for training the staff in any of the workshop participants' libraries.