

Use and Perceptions of the Internet Among Academic Librarians in Italy: A Survey at the University of Padova

Research proposal

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1) INTRODUCTION

Il tuo scopo è un'analisi non quantitativa ma qualitativa degli atteggiamenti dei bibliotecari verso Internet. Per questo motivo devi limitare il campione ed effettuare un'analisi costruttivista che vada in profondità per capire veramente la loro comprensione del fenomeno Internet.

The main purpose of this project is to study the perceptions, attitudes, and habits of academic librarians in Italy in relation to the spread of the Internet and the World Wide Web within their working life.

In particular, the aim is to find out how the Internet has entered every side of the librarian profession, and which are the possible consequences on the workloads.

The attention will be also put on librarians' keenness of networked technologies.

- identified the research area

Ricordati di descrivere, anche con dati quantitativi le caratteristiche del filedwork scelto. In particolare perché è interessante per la tua ricerca. Ad esempio la disintermediazione ha portato cambiamenti nell'uso della biblioteca? Gli utenti leggono e prendono in prestito meno o più di prima? Quale è l'uso di Internet per i servizi?

In order to achieve that main goal, librarians from one the University of Padova have been chosen to represent a portrait of the situation.

We think this research is important because it can give a whole portrait of librarians attitudes towards, and their daily routine in the age of the Internet. Results will also respond to broad questions like: with the widespread diffusion of the Internet do we still need libraries and librarians?

2) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2A) AIMS: (the purpose of the study)

Aims sono generali (mai raggiungibili, solo una tendenza) e centrati su qualcosa che ci si propone di raggiungere a beneficio di altri. Uno scopo può essere ad esempio migliorare la formazione dei bibliotecari in servizio, oppure migliorare il servizio attraverso un miglior uso di Internet.

The aims of the research are stated in order to understand and clarify the importance of Internet-related technologies among University of Padova library professionals.

This research therefore aims to:

- Investigate the use of Internet-related technologies at the University of Padova Libraries;
- Verify which technologies are used and in which proportion;
- State the attitude and perceptions of librarians toward those technologies;
- Identify if there is a formal training on those technologies;
- Establish training needs in this environment;
- Identify issues for further investigations.

2B) OBJECTIVES: (How that purpose will be achieved)

Queste sono le attività da pianificare, non gli obiettivi

- investigation of Internet knowledge among academic librarians in Padova
- survey of the use of the Internet for working purposes
- evaluation of current practices in the use of the Internet
- survey of needs and expectations surrounding the Internet
- suggestions of approaches to integrate the Internet in the working habits.

2C) RESEARCH QUESTIONS

*Rispetto al tuo scopo, devi definire le domande prioritarie a cui dare risposta, poi le altre.
Quale è dunque il tuo focus?*

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- Have librarians embraced willingly Internet-related technologies?
- In which measure do they feel obliged to use them?
- Can we say that librarians feel threatened by the Internet?
- Has the Internet facilitate their job?

- Have Internet related technologies produced a heavier workload for them?

3) BACKGROUND

Ricordati di evidenziare le problematiche che andrai ad esaminare, ad esempio la non comprensione delle implicazioni per l'uso di Internet.

- *completed a thorough critical and selective review of your topic area*
- *related the literature to your proposal*

The literature shows that the proposed research is maybe the first one of this kind in Italy, at least for what the researcher could establish. For this reason it will not be possible to compare the results with others of the same kind. Instead, several other studies and surveys of the kind have been conducted since the spread of the Internet in libraries worldwide, above all in USA.

According to Scarlett (1997), "there is no doubt that the information profession has the skills and experience to integrate the Internet very effectively indeed", and she concludes that "the only real danger to the information profession lies in ignoring or failing to grasp the implications of the Internet" (p106).

(to be continued...)

Academic librarians in Italy

A first remark concerns the status of academic librarians in Italy. Marking a difference towards the majority of civilised countries all over the world, Italy doesn't recognise a professional status to librarians. In terms of education, a degree in librarianship is not yet officially required to enter the profession. Even if also abroad the question of the status of the profession is not always clear: for example Marcella D. Genz (1998) notes that even "within the realm of the reference desk, no one has yet completely defined what it is that a professional reference librarian does in relation to the paraprofessional and vice-versa or what expertise might be developed during the course of a master's level program in information studies or with time and experience to make the work roles sufficiently distinctive to label one professional, the other paraprofessional"(p505).

(to be continued...)

Review of the literature:
surveys on academic librarians and their Internet use.

In 1992 Peter Brophy reported on a survey on “The use of information technology by senior staff in UK academic libraries” (British Library R&D Report 6087) in which he stated that one of the most noteworthy development “seen in academic librarianship” was “networking”, which had “become virtually universal thanks to the continuing success of the JANET ... and particularly to the enthusiasm with which librarians have made use of its possibilities” (p2).

Of course JANET reflected a national situation, being JANET “a private, government funded network for education and research”

(to be continued...)

4) METHODOLOGY

chosen and justified suitable methodologies upon which to base Project active

The proposed research will study the impact of the Internet and the World Wide Web on University of Padova librarians, their approach, the real use and working habits.

The SAMPLE

The whole population of librarians will be considered (???NO assolutamente), and data will be collected in both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher chose this setting to perform the study because of her working presence within that same University.

DATA collection:

Questionnaire:

- close-ended questions
- open-ended questions

The Questionnaire will be pre-tested on a 5-10% of the sample (see: <http://marketing-bulletin.massey.ac.nz/article9/article5.asp>)

Personal interviews (on the telephone? via email?)

Focus groups (?)

Ricorda: identified a timetable of activities

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