National Libraries and Academic Libraries:
Partners in e-Educational National and Global Action

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Национални библиотеки и университетски библиотеки: партньори в национални и глобални дейности в областта на електронното образование

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ABSTRACT

The paper underlines the new role the National Libraries worldwide can play as electronic guides inside an organizational schedule where the meanings of collaboration and interactivity dominate. In the new electronic époque, where the need for an effective national and international policy in the field of librarianship, as expressed as a general cultural policy, is more than imperative, National Libraries with the Academic Libraries can lay out a match of innovative guidelines. The point is how to provide not only information but also real knowledge to the patrons and the librarians themselves and how the whole thing can be done under the prearrangements of accuracy, promptness and validity. In the electronic époque in which we live and work, we need the best results in the quickest time. We search for collaborative solutions worldwide; let's see how the National Libraries and Academic Libraries can be real e-educators.

Keywords: National Libraries; Academic Libraries; Electronic époque; E-educators.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Докладът подчертава новата роля, която националните библиотеки по света могат да играят в рамките на организационна схема, основана на сътрудничество и

взаимодействие. В новата електронна епоха необходимостта от ефективна национална и международна политика в библиотечното дело (като част от цялостната културна политика) е повече от наложителна. Националните и университетските библиотеки могат да разработят иновационни насоки. Същественото тук е как да се осигури не само информация, но също и същинско познание за ползвателите на библиотеките и за самите библиотекари и как това да се постигне при предварително определените условия на прицизност, бързина и адекватност. В електронната епоха, в която днес живеем и работим, се нуждаем от най-добри резултати за най-кратко време. Търсим решения за сътрудничество навсякъде. Нека видим как националните и университетските библиотеки могат да станат действителни фактори за електронно образование.

Ключови думи: *национални библиотеки; университетски библиотеки; електронна епоха.*

INTRODUCTION

During every progressive historical period, society has made its alterations in the library structure, service systems, functions and priorities. But the quality and energy in satisfying the requests of the users are the main and invariable aims of the assistance. Nowadays, a different approach sets libraries and librarians in front of a new challenge: orienting their roles in providing real knowledge to our local, national and international patrons. Academic Libraries, as they are currently structured and funded, need extra support to respond to the challenges that are broadly associated with information technology, which affects the nature of information resources. On the other hand, information and research resources are becoming more varied and there are new means to deliver information, most particularly over the Internet, combined with the commodification of information resources that have undermined longstanding understandings concerning scholarly and educational access to research resources.

RESEARCH ISSUES

a) Specialization. Research in all fields is becoming ever more specialized. The questions under study, the materials needed to pursue investigations, and the results are all becoming increasingly narrow.

b) Universalism. Particularly in the humanities, though to some extent in other fields as well, as any topic is now fair game for research, libraries now share the responsibility with a host of other institutions, to provide not only answers to certain questions, but real guidance to knowledge. So, many academic libraries must explicitly support faculty research as well as instruction. Institutional objectives likewise place equal weight on both scholarship and teaching.

c) The high costs of higher education have also stimulated alternate models for education and training. New models pose challenges to traditional modes of providing access to higher education, to the structures through which universities are organized and governed, to the relative stature of teaching and research within each institution, in terms of accreditation and standards, and on. The changing nature and quantity of scholarly resources now at hand force us to confront new kinds of material. Cooperation among libraries is essential.

New alliances also have to be forged with other kinds of cultural institutions and repositories.

d) <u>It is ever more difficult for libraries to anticipate and address their users' needs.</u> Successful responses require new initiatives within single institutions, collaborative measures, and efforts involving the entire system of scholarly communication.

SERIOUS QUESTIONS

Academic Libraries must adjust to the trends nowadays.

    a. When, where, and to what extent should academic libraries take on a research and development role in providing new services?

    b. What will the academic library become in these new types of Open and Distance Learning Universities?

A strategic sense of where we are, where we need to go, and the opportunities and obstacles along the way are crucial. Technology is important, but technological millennialism is an inadequate response to the challenges we face.

CHALLENGES

A new collaborative schedule that will:

- Offer the opportunity to modernize library services so that libraries are better able to meet the changes in distance learning matters.
- Meet the users' expectations of how information technology will help them find information in a range of issues, especially, in education mainly characterized as student-centered / independent/ distance learning.
- Libraries and information centers are viewed as an important component of this massive educational effort.
- While some participants initially viewed libraries as playing only a supporting role to education, a stronger position eventually emerged, that of libraries as lifelong learning centers, with education an essential part of their mission.
- Continue to improve evaluation, research, and dissemination of library-based literacy efforts by libraries and other literacy providers.
- Redirect administrative responsibility for provision of real knowledge and not only information.
- Interdependency of academic libraries cannot mean self-reliance. The modern demands formulate sharing not only of resources but also of functions and roles inside a well-organized framework respecting the particularities.

PROPOSALS

- Integrating services around the *virtual reference desk* including union catalogue.
- All cultural developments take place through cultural exchanges and interactions.

- Must contribute to create new social spaces for educational feedback and learning interactivity.
- Promotion for the co-existence of different patrons according to many factors, such as age, nationality, scientific subjects,
- Compilation of retrospective bibliography
- Coordination with UNESCO and transmission of a translated data for inclusion in Index Translatiorum.
- Coordination with national bibliographic centers of other countries and exchange of bibliographic data and national bibliographies on reciprocal basis.
- Meeting the Frontiers within the pale of the world community.
- Making of national bibliographies that are Unicode based, covering all languages is essential.
- Refine NL's and AL's mission and create a marketing plan which in turn will prompt it to "reach-out" and in that process look for who, where and what for its clientele are.
- Especially, National Libraries will have to change their roles from "gatekeepers" to "gateways" of knowledge and in that they should be performing such tasks as information mapping, information audits, training in information literacy, information about best practices / competencies and helping its users to navigate through the world of information more meaningfully.

IFLA DIGITAL REFERENCE GUIDELINES

Let's remember the IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines. They include recommendations for administration of digital reference services, including reference policy, planning, staffing, training, interface design, legal issues, evaluation and collaboration. Specifically we have:

1. General Guidelines - digital reference must meet the same standards as traditional reference service, including commitment to effective assistance, professional courtesy, intellectual freedom, turnaround policy, compliance with licensing agreements, good search strategies and response.

2. Content Guidelines - digital reference should be informative, promote information literacy, maintain objectivity, use neutral questioning techniques, well structured responses, avoid jargon, respond clearly and at appropriate level, cite appropriately, value-added.

3. Chat Guidelines - timely, librarian identified, reassuring, develop institutionalized scripts, information clarified, open-ended questioning, searches refined.

According to the IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines, "The purpose of these guidelines is to promote digital reference best practices on an international basis. The online environment is uniquely suited to consortia models of work and to the development of shared resources. Libraries in different countries may have different traditions of public service, which both affect their current reference practices and their patrons' expectations. But it is also important to recognize that new technologies will enable librarians to redefine the scope of their public services. These guidelines attempt to create some common standards from diverse traditions in the hope that this will allow the worldwide community of librarians to freely explore the possibilities."

MARKETING KNOWLEDGE

As knowledge-based institutions, both universities and national libraries sit particularly precariously in the path of what the economic historian Joseph Schumpeter called 'the gale of creative destruction' being generated by IT and the transition to a 'knowledge society'. They are being forced to re-assess their roles, restructure their internal activities, develop new service paradigms, and create new partnerships as they seek to deal with contemporary challenges. One of these is customer feedback.

Feedback has been collected in a variety of ways, including monitoring access logs for the web site, email contact with users and discussions with library staff and potential content providers. Building on this network infrastructure, involve a wide range of policy, design and operational issues that needed careful attention in the planning and implementation stages of the project. These issues include:

- Constructing a site architecture that allows for growth and updating.
- Creating a navigation protocol to maximize the use ability of the site.
- Establishing the 'look and feel' of the site, involving design concepts, appropriate logos and adherence to disabilities access guidelines.
- Assessing legal issues with respect to intellectual property ownership and copyright in an electronic environment and establishing appropriate working procedures.
- Satisfactory resolution of such developmental and operational protocols is crucial in a project involving more than one participant, particularly given the considerable number of individuals likely to be contributing to the development and maintenance of the site.
- Intra-institutional environments
- Inter-institutional relations

THE GOAL

1. assist in the building of strong national consortia;
2. be the premier multi-country negotiator for securing affordable commercial electronic information services;
3. strongly advocate for the development of local digital resources;
4. provide a strong central business relationship with content providers;
5. leverage multi-national expertise and resources to expand the access to information;
6. provide top quality educational and consulting services;
7. be an advocate for the adoption and advancement of effective information distribution models; and,
8. develop model partnerships with global funding agencies, foundations, consortial groups, and content providers.

It is characteristic that the European Association of Library and Archive Associations (EBLIDA) believes that "libraries and archives constitute a vital and necessary building block in the development of the knowledge and information society in which all citizens benefit from access to information, knowledge libraries and culture through publicly funded cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, archives and museums. Libraries and archives empower European citizens by collecting, organising and providing access to a great range of high quality, current

information and services to millions of researchers, students and members of the public, as well a by preserving our cultural heritage. Libraries and archives bridge the gap between the information rich and the information poor by delivering services free of charge or nearly free of charge. The free-of-charge principle is a decisive instrument in the development of an information society in Europe that delivers services to all its citizens".

The Free Access to Knowledge and the Issue of Literacy are really very important and collaborative proposals where the protagonists will be the Academic and National Librarians as e-educators could give solutions. Many libraries have outreach programs designed to meet the needs of specific groups of people with limited literacy skills. For example, people for whom English is a second language, who present a diversity of first languages and literacy levels, have been reached through tutoring programs with materials that match their cultures and interests. Appropriate materials have also been distributed to the institutionalized, including those in prisons, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and group homes for the elderly and disabled. Intensive prison programs, coordinated under a literacy librarian, have offered specialized software and English-as-a-second-language training.

THE NECESSITY FOR LIBRARIANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The librarians' attitudes determine to a very great extent the patronage of users to the library. At all levels of education, there is a general lack of awareness about the roles and duties of librarians and libraries and their potentials to education. This poses a formidable barrier to equitable access to information and the promotion of knowledge in our society. People are aware of the need for information acquisition but are ignorant of the roles of the library and librarians. Librarians in higher education make an important contribution to the academic community in which they practice. Although a somewhat related but different question about the need for libraries is interesting and engaging, this paper seeks only to elaborate on why librarians are essential. Librarians are necessary in the college and university environment to accomplish a number of key objectives, a preliminary listing of which is given below. This listing is not complete nor is it in any particular order of importance.

- Disseminate and interpret library collection material to meet the informational, educational, and cultural needs of students who are pursuing academic success and to support faculty who are engaged in knowledge creation and classroom instruction.
- Provide instructional programs in information literacy and technology fluency with an emphasis on the integration of emerging technologies to strengthen the student's interest and skill development for life-long learning in his/her post-graduate life.
- Maintain an ongoing assessment of library and information services, use of technologies, and resource collections that enhance and support the college's or university's academic curriculum.
- Provide a range of programs, services, and material that strengthen the student's purposeful participation in the issues that face our global society and that promote the student's lively commitment to his/her own physical and/or spiritual well-being.
- Provide skill and expertise in the institution's initiatives, such as distance learning, that envision leveraging the library's academic information resources, its physical facilities, and that utilize the expertise and skills of its librarian personnel.

- Engage in the selection, acquisition, organization, and preservation of integrated collections of books and journals creatively managed, accessed, and delivered in an expanding rich environment of global electronic resources.
- Engage in content aggregation, access management, and data warehousing of student produced digital academic resources to increase the availability and richness of student research and work-product that features and encourages the use of multimedia and hypermedia technologies.

Libraries should work alongside educators and attract new customers as:
- The number of students is still growing.
- Different types of students are asking for education; participation of women, older students, and students from ethnic minorities is growing.
- Increasingly, work and study are combined, and that leads to a need for more flexible learning arrangements in which the campus or school building is no longer central to the educational process.
- More generally, there is a trend towards lifelong learning.
- Lifelong learning leads to an emphasis on "learning to learn". Knowledge becomes obsolete at an ever-increasing rate in a knowledge economy, and knowledge workers need to be able to refresh their knowledge on a regular basis.
- Higher education institutions have long had a monopoly in providing education, but increasingly, companies and public bodies possess knowledge that can be reused for educational purposes, partly for in-house training (knowledge management) but also to offer to external markets.
- Education is under constant budget pressure, thus there is a need for more efficient and effective education.
- Students more and more are behaving like consumers who want to make informed choices about how and where they want to be educated, which implies students are no longer committed to one institution.

The Web is not Enough

The Web-search tools are not sufficient. As library use decreases and with more and more information found online on the Web, will we still need reference, even e-reference librarians? A search of the World Wide Web will turn up only the online information. Instead of that, certainly a National Library or every other library has sources more accurate and reliable. Especially a library-to-library services operation with reference experts submitting patrons' questions online better guarantees the thorough tracking of the existing material and pushes away the danger of many times "dull" web sites with strange scopes and motives. Steven Bell, director of the library at Philadelphia University, says "librarians need to know much more than just mainstream librarianship to maintain their professional vitality" and we would like to add that librarians need to practice librarianship for their country's and their nation's good, feeling technology as a good mean for teaching people and learning by their collaborators. Really is the Internet always everything? It may catch the moment, the year, the decade but surely without the librarian's collaboration it can't give birth to everything. That is why most of e-reference projects are named "Ask a Librarian". The Internet itself does not go where the information is

and research is a multi-library process. Information can be true and still wrong. Only after a comprehensive investigation can be objective.

We must think of these factors:
- Reinforce the Inadequate Resource Utilization
- Our National Libraries have built rich learning resource materials. These remain largely underutilized even though there is an increasing demand for right and now availability of the right information.
- Librarians have been expressing satisfaction when they have been able to provide the information to the client as per his/her specific request. Attempting something beyond that like real guide to knowledge is what is required in case they intend bringing educational orientation into their set-ups. This means a major shift in approaches/mind-sets is required.
- Since academic libraries generally exist in relation to heir parent bodies, they are viewed as sub-systems of the main system, being concerned with storage and security aspects of the information rather than its use as"Knowledge good".

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Help Libraries and Librarians to promote:
- The value of the library services and the educational role of the librarians
- The Influence of new economies progress facilitating contact between people (virtual library learners) and librarians (virtual e-guiders –educators)
- The Library must create useful and attractive services for an important group of users, such as small children need help for doing their homework and distant learners of all ages.
- Academic and National Libraries need to go out of their professional circle and convert the libraries in real sociocultural spaces. Culture means above all education and not just information.
- Training and instruction in the use of virtual services and in the scientific field of librarianship, orienting more future librarians in the issues covering librarian and information studies. The tool and the intermediate become the subject and the educator.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Despite the stereotypes, librarians are not solitary types. Just as other workers do, they interact with colleagues to get their work done. One of the great contributions of ethnography to our vision is to reveal the complexity of these kinds of interactions. They can be both formalised, where a complex task is broken down and tackled by a number of people with varying levels and different kinds of expertise, and also informal, where a problem arises and people creatively use their colleagues as resources to help them work around the problem and come up with innovative solutions. Frequently, ethnographic studies have revealed the creativity and flexibility with which people deal with exceptions to the normal flow of work. Staff-staff collaboration can be learning-oriented as well as work-oriented. A powerful and effective way of acquiring skills is by working alongside more experienced colleagues Staff-staff collaboration can be learning-oriented as well as work-oriented. This is known as the socio-technical design challenge. It

involves determining what should be built not merely by reference to what is technically possible, but what would be useful to the organisation and acceptable to the organisation. Collaborative work is necessarily social. Thus a system that flouts social rules, norms or customs, even if it does useful things, may fail to be used. The key to selecting, or developing, successful collaborative systems appears to involve an understanding of what is currently done, and designing systems that not only can mesh with that way of working, but can adapt gracefully as people change their way of working over time.

It is very important to mention what Abbas summarizes as a number of roles that others have identified for future librarians:
- Librarian as gateway to future and to the past.
- Librarian as teacher
- Librarian as knowledge manager/worker.
- Librarians as organizers of networked resources.
- Librarians as advocates for information policy development.
- Librarians as community partners.
- Librarians as "sifters" of information resources.
- Librarians as collaborators with technology resource providers.
- Librarians as technicians.
- Librarians as individual information consultants.

With regard to the importance of digital reference in supporting critical thinking in distance education, librarians should have certain skills. Knowledge skills include having an appropriate level of literacy and numeracy skills; being able to identify, access, organize and communicate knowledge in both written and oral English; having good listening skills; having an international awareness; and having the ability to use appropriate technology to further the above. Thinking skills include being willing to challenge current knowledge and thinking; having conceptual skills; having problem-solving skills; being creative and imaginative thinkers; being able to combine theory and practice; and being able to reflect on and evaluate their own performance. These skills allow librarians to support critical thinking in distance education.

The field where academic and national librarians can be partners is e-educating students in librarianship. So, we seek to expose them to the benefits and the difficulties that are associated with remote or digital reference and to become increasingly aware of the processes that are involved in information seeking. Learning is structured so that students first read widely to develop a sense of the issues and problems that are being studied and argued, and then develop a situation or problem-based scenario that can be addressed. Once such a problem scenario has been developed, the students then think through the possible approaches to take to resolve the various aspects of the problem and the types of resources and services that would assist in its resolution. In addressing this scenario, they also consider the audience or individuals concerned, the education and facilities that they can likely access, the suitability of the available systems, and services to which they will have access.

During the past few years, radical improvements have been made in educational technology and distance education has taken up a lot of space, creating online classes, setting up virtual study groups and generally doing more or less anything we have experienced in traditional classrooms. It is really noticeable that in 2001 one of the pre conferences in this year's Association of College and Research Libraries Conference had to do with "Teaching and Learning in 3-D Environments". In 1998 the same Association promoted the philosophy that "distance patrons are entitled to library services and resources equivalent to those provided in traditional campus settings". Today there is a big question on how tools, like the videoconferencing, that allow us hold classes online, are really easily adaptable for one-on-one reference use where you could have many people in line and it would be difficult to figure out who came next. Now imagine a schema where patrons are the librarians themselves and the "course's theme" is how to provide in real-time accurate, comprehensive and reliable information to the users in the type of instantaneous response and immediate gratification. The conductors could be the specialist librarians of the National Library having all the qualifications to function as "e-educators" in the field of the e-reference itself. This can be done in an interactive framework with a wide variety of tools through contact centre software designed expressly for covering that need. VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), which allow the librarian and the patron – in our case is the librarian himself- to hold a voice conversation on the same line they are using for the Web connection- can be used as a method enabling talking back and forth at the same time, just as if they were on the phone. In any case technology offers functional tools.

The point is how we, the National Libraries, can use those developing new models and implementing distance-electronic learning in what we most care about, the e-training of the reference librarians. The important thing is not only to replace the crew of the sitting at the buildings desks reference librarians by online voice-message shippers, but how we can create a national, well qualified e-staff that can handle the reference traffic appropriately. A librarian of the National Library will be always there guiding them in online simulations, preparing to cope with specialized needs librarians as "patrons-students" have. Practically that can be realized with the asynchronous (time-lagged) and synchronous (real-time) and the ramifications of the two types of interacting on the e-instructor and the e-student.

This is of the utmost importance for librarians who need a quick introduction or for those who are not intimately involved with distance librarianship but will find themselves in the position of providing services to distance patrons. Librarians are teaching more and their patrons are demanding more instruction from their questions. Our role as instructors promises only to get bigger not only because the electronic environment continues to expand, but mostly because of the mission and the leading role the National libraries have to carry out. The challenge is in front of us! Let's organize our navigation platform.

WHAT IS A NATIONAL LIBRARY?

According to UNESCO:
NL are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and functioning as a deposit library whether by law or under other arrangements. National library service is an organization, which is responsible for providing

of one or more kinds to communities throughout the country through a network of branch or affiliated libraries and service points. Once a good set of collaborative guidelines is adopted, that represents a powerful incentive to meet a certain level of new quality where education is not a case of universities and professors but also of libraries and librarians. Culture must transcend the individual whereby men in each generation possess, potentially at least, all that their predecessors have ever learnt. In this competitive world, where all kinds of barriers have vanished and the world has become a global village, a librarian needs to adopt his new role between professional performance and educational.

Most of the National Libraries (NL) have been prestigious institutions set up to be representatives of the country's cultural and historical heritage. In the present complex society with its huge and inevitable dependence on technology, there is a constant need for improving the dissemination of knowledge processes. No Library and Information Service (LIS) can regard itself as self-sufficient, however broad-based and comprehensive it may be. The NL becomes a part and parcel of the needs of the nation through its effective service system. With the Academic Libraries (AL), the NL should be at the apex of the Educational Framework of the country. A National Policy for this purpose is necessary. National Digital Library sources will support distance learning, comparative study and training staff that needs reference. The framework must have the ability to enable worldwide access to a never-ending supply of distributed information which is constantly and conveniently available and updateable. Online Sources, Hybrid Sources, Portal Sites all these in a Virtual Learning Environment can provide guaranteed document authenticity to the patrons, avoiding the dangers from the uncontrolled storm of web sites.

Schedule

Pre-planning is imperative. It provides time to define the parameters of the framework, acquire the necessary technical and psychological background to meet the challenges and devise an effective strategy for implementation. Next, focus on the requirements of the patrons; adopt new kinds of methods to make its service available to the public learners; and transfer the focus of library's work from the traditional functions to meeting the demands of knowledge.

A network among National Library and Academic Libraries is also imperative. No library alone can provide all the requested knowledge. A Virtual Library Network could acclimatize the staff engaged in library service to the role of "Knowledge guide" rather than the "provider of information", in the new multi-functional electronic global époque. Cost is then reduced by joint construction and sharing of information. In collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education and the Consortium of Academic Libraries and National Libraries, a distributed, extensible and interoperable network with the whole possible scale of contents and resources easily reachable and properly organized to cover the needs of the distance students inside the nation but and those of every patron, with the same scientific or cultural interests worldwide. The initiative could be named as "National Cultural Resources Sharing Desk for Global Use".

The "For All Global Library" is also "MyLibrary". Individualized services can be provided to users by analyzing with the "clever technology" each account according to the

queries and the issues he is interested in. In future visits to "MyLibrary", distant learners will be served with the latest related information related to those topics previously. With Cookie-supported browsers, patrons may log into MyLibary and select with the real time assistance of specially qualified librarians the "NCR" resources and other in parallel interest international resources according to their own knowledge structure and demands. So, functions like bookmark, notice of latest information, search engine connections and customization of Web page style are especially for each user.

Special concern should be taken for the students of the Open University, constructing a thematically divided Virtual Reference Desk with the librarians of the National Library and of the Academic Libraries sharing their responsibilities according their own experience and playing a real active role in the educational procedure.

International Exchanges with other Libraries through regular exchange programs and international seminars making a prominent step in this trend, in the dissemination of the need of acting "together" as partners in the educational procedure, deepening mutual understanding among us and building collaborative activities. The end users will be learners, creators, seekers or software. Any of these could discover and access resources through a query, browsing or a pre-determined path. The access services will search, gather, alert, and permit publishing for use in order to put resources back into the repository. The provision services will expose metadata, deliver content and store and manage material.

The advantages of such a virtual organization would be many, including:

- globalization of the local nation;
- real-time access to pertinent information;
- virtual reference service;
- interactive and dynamic information metaphors;
- collaboration and with a number of other institutions, publishers, museums and educational bodies
- maximization of the satisfaction of the distance users
- avoid gaps in collection that are filled, according to the learning subjects in guiding the remote patron not only to the right library but mainly to the right librarian who is properly prepared and has the experience in this specific subject.
- act as a referral center by coordinating services for purveying full and accurate knowledge
- cultural change at the partner librarians.

The whole effort may be a difficult but not a distant vision. There are many examples of digital information services, such as the US Library of Congress, the British Library, the National Library of Canada, the National Library of Australia, and the Boston Public Library.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a rapid change and development of the virtual services. The basic policies of learners' services are to change our point of view about our mission, thinking and practicing as

learners and educators simultaneously; and unifying and simplifying the procedures for meeting users' knowledge needs promptly and effectively. It is ambitious but it is worthwhile, facing knowledge as colleagues and not as individual libraries, to get closer to the ideal, to our social, educational effective role nationally and internationally.

There is a need for developing a management and marketing plan redefining the mission of the national and academic librarians; identify, design, package and promote virtual services to meet the needs of the patrons satisfactorily; redesign and redevelop systems and procedures to have client orientation in-built in them; develop staff to be responsive to new role and new attitude; emphasize, in the evaluation of services, the factors most important to the patrons' and the librarians' community using these services, like response time, accessibility, interoperability, interactivity, value and effectiveness. Being icons of information policy for their respective countries academic, but mainly, national libraries are perhaps the most visible manifestations of information, distribution that can be observed by the outside world. While national information policies are not promulgated in such institutions, but rather in countries legislative bodies, the libraries do play symbolic roles beyond the practical ones of organizing and providing access to information.

National libraries and their utmost representatives, the national librarians, should contribute to the development of international policy in the field of a well organized educational framework where technology enhance services offered by libraries. With e-reference and e-learning libraries reach new patrons, streamline and broaden their roles, promote themselves as knowledge providers and work innovatively. The future will require the librarians to reorient themselves, think creatively and adopt new technology to generate services and resources where the skills of structuring and organizing resources are put to its best use. With myriad of disorganized and unverified information, the Web is in need of librarians who are trained in the structuring of knowledge, have the ability to locate and evaluate information resources and have in-depth subject expertise. If the librarians are committed to sustain their roles as e-educators in the e-merging space of distance education, they would need to adopt new technology, interact with users to learn about their requirements and their expectations. The librarians have to join the academic community as facilitators and collaborators, guide the students through the complex maze of digital resources, teaching them how to search effectively and helping them judge the quality and usefulness of the information they encounter. The opportunities are limitless especially in the chaotic scenario of Internet.

A library is considered the "temple of learning" where intellectuals and commoners come to quench their thirst for knowledge. Especially the NL is that treasure of knowledge, which reveals to the explorer the wisdom of the past, the realities of the present and serves as a beacon light for the future. Political, economic and social circumstances create, shape and develop libraries. Among libraries we can find diversity and difference. The most modern and well-equipped library is not necessarily the most developed in the art of stimulating popular participation and democracy. Good examples can be found all over the world. Librarians have their own specific role, not only as message carriers, but as e-educators!