

Task 1: Literature Review

# **The "edulibrarian" in the Learning Society.**

**A Literature Review  
about old questions and new answers:  
what does it mean being librarians today?  
What does it imply?**



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## **Introduction: Why this Literature Review**

There are no doubts: Information, Knowledge and Learning are the key words of our era. Always during the time, our profession has had a specific mission: to serve the needs of the society; nowadays, more than ever, user must be the center of our operating. We have no choice: in order to survive and in order to continue to be indispensable, we must adapt ourselves to the contemporary world. It should not be a strain, but a stimulus! We wanted to travel around and into the specialized literature, looking for new roads to run, for new professional stimuli to enjoy, for innovated roles to cover. The paradox of a society which defines itself through the power of information, communication and learning, reducing at the same time our profession as something "optional", needs to be understood by us: if we know the problem, as Reflective Information Professionals we can solve it. It's on us, it's our responsibility: we can make society understood we are indispensable. What's the way to achieve it? This literature review is about it.

### **1. The general context: Libraries in the Learning Society**

#### **1.1. Learning Society and Learning Organizations**

For many contemporary authors, Ransom (1992) first of all, Schön (1983) with his exhortation to become adept at learning<sup>1</sup>, represent the first great theorist of the Learning Society. In truth, it made part of the first great wave of thinkers around the notion. Before entering in the specific theme, we need some clarifications about the terminology.

According to Toriello (2005), the word "learning" contains two possible and complementary visions: on one side, the "education" broadly speaking, in a far-ranging perspective which considers the social, economic, political and cultural aspects. On the other side, "learning" can be considered as a mental process, with a very individual point of view.

In our opinion, this is a very simple but clear definition which validly answers to the diffused urgency expressed by Ransom (1998): "(...) there is a need for greater clarity in defining the meaning of the Learning Society and for establishing criteria which allow some rather than all usages to be interpreted as legitimated".

Althought Hughes and Tight (1998) say that "Learning Society can be approached as an aspiration and as a description", nowadays the Society which needs to learn (and to learn continuously!) is luckily considered as a fact, a truth, something referring to our daily life.

There are different ways to explore this concept; following Edwards (1997), three "key strands" can be discussed:

1. THE LEARNING SOCIETY IS AN EDUCATED SOCIETY. This point of view is based on the concepts of active citizenship, liberal democracy and equal opportunities. Historically speaking, this idea refers to the social policy framework of post Second World War Social Democracies. Theoretically speaking, this is what we call a "modernist" discourse.
2. A LEARNING SOCIETY IS A LEARNING MARKET. The society focused on learning is seen as the condition to support the competitiveness of the economy. The aim is to meet the demands of individuals and employers for the updating of skills and competences.
3. A LEARNING SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH LEARNERS ADOPT A LEARNING APPROACH TO LIFE. According to this typically post-modern orientation, Lifelong Learning is seen as a contingent condition of individuals to which policies have to respond.

We prefer to consider these three strands not as fixed and independent definitions but as different ways to examine the same reality, emphasizing every time one aspect of it.

"Learning Society" implies a change, involving work and personal environments of everyone of us; at the economic and social levels, the specific literature talks about the urgency of the creation (we think it would be better saying "evolution") of "learning organizations", able to control and manage the change of the whole society.

Although the specific literature, in general, seem to avoid the terminological and conceptual problem between "Learning Organization" and "Knowledge Organization" - once again, a problem connected with the possible means of "knowledge" and "learning"- we are inclined to an inclusive point of view which does not separate the two concepts as two consecutive stages, considering them two parallel phenomena which reciprocally influence and enrich each other. Indeed, a knowledge organization can come true only if a strong motivation to learning activities constantly supports it. Again, a learning organization needs to be based on the recently achieved knowledge, analyzing and improving ideas.

Some writers approach the Learning Organizations as something that are started and developed by senior management; we can include in this "top/down managerial vision" Pedler (1991)<sup>2</sup>, Hughes and Tight (1998).

Pedler (1991) considers the Learning Organization a vision of what might be possible, but he lists some unavoidable conditions:

"(...) It's not brought about simply by training individuals; it can only happens as a result of learning at whole organization level. A Learning Organization is an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself".

Conversely, this vision can be contrasted with more bottom-up or democratic approaches such as that adopted by Watkins and Marsick (1992)<sup>3</sup> and Senge(1990)<sup>4</sup>; according to them, the pillar of a Learning Organization is team-work: an organization can grow only

if there is a sharing of ideas, opinions and abilities among the staff. "Learning Organizations are characterized by total employee involvement in a process of a collaboratively conducted, collectively accountable, change directed towards shared values or principles".

However, we can summarize some characteristics, following Kerka's (1995) idea: "learning is valuable, continuous, and most effective when shared and that every experience is an opportunity to learn". So, the author underlines the aims and the tasks of Learning Organizations, which must:

- ◆ provide continuous learning opportunities;
- ◆ use learning to reach their goals;
- ◆ link individual performance with organizational performance;
- ◆ foster inquiry and dialogue, making it safe for people to share openly and take risks;
- ◆ embrace creative tension as a source of energy and renewal;
- ◆ are continuously aware of and interact with their environment.

So, Learning Organization is the way to make Learning Society more concrete in a vision which goes beyond the "responsability" of the learning activities, focusing on the collaboration and collectivity.

Garvin (1994) asserts that the concept of Learning Organization plays a fundamental role in helping librarians and libraries to cultivate the change, becoming active part of actual Learning Society. According to Vannucci (2000), today Library Systems are to all intents and purposes Learning Organizations, where the whole sum of professional knowledge and competencies of each librarian as well as the processes of their interactions create a specific organization culture. Similarly, Dowlin (2000) underlines that the society of today, thanks to technologies, offers an unlosable opportunity for libraries to become learning institutions. Again, Koganuramath and Angadi (2000) emphasize the importance of team-work: only by working together and building on each other's knowledge and experiences we can improve services, transforming our library in a real Learning Organization. Talking about priorities for 21<sup>th</sup> century in Librarianship, Ward (1999) suggests learning activities as fundamental tool to face changes.

Again Garvin (1994) underlines that learning organizations are composed of individuals who never stop learning.

## 1.2. Lifelong Education, Lifelong Learning, Lifewide Learning

*In the knowledge-based societies that are emerging around the world, adult and continuing education have become an imperative in the community and at the workplace.*

The Hamburg Declaration  
on Adult Learning, 1997

Especially in this case, lexical ambiguity has caused semantic ambiguity too. The term "education" seems to be too "old" in actual pedagogy studies, connected to out-of-date conceptions about the oldfashioned division among formal and informal Education; according to Bundy (1999)<sup>5</sup> the formal education as concept and as a concrete application is not able to face the changes of our era. The "Memorandum of Lifelong Learning" (2000) from the Commission of the European Communities tries to state the basic principle of the question: what until that moment had been written and said through many different words (permanent education, adult education, continuous education...) must be included into a single and mature expression, "lifelong learning", to underline the continuous, personal and deep character of the term "learning". Following Toriello (2005), we must start from the definition of two fundamental concepts: Lifelong Learning and Lifewide Learning. Lifewide refers to a more spatial dimension, defining a learning activity which embraces all aspects of the life, evidencing the complementary nature of human mind. Lifelong learning refers to a more temporal vision; the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning explains the issue in this way: "The term *Lifelong* learning draws attention to time, learning throughout life, either continuously or periodically. The newly-coined term *Lifewide* learning enriches the picture by drawing attention to the spread of learning, which can take place across the full range of our lives at anyone stage"<sup>6</sup>. We share Toriello's opinion (2005) about considering them two faces of the same medal. Resman (2003) emphasizes three fundamental conditions, analyzing the single segments of the expression: "(...)"<sup>7</sup> In the first place, it has to be *Lifelong*, secondly it has to be *Learning* (not *Teaching*, not *Course Provision*, not *Training*) but focused on the learner's needs!! Thirdly, it has to marry all of this into a seamless infrastructure which makes available all the resources of the community". Similarly, Gross (1977)<sup>8</sup> and Candy (1991)<sup>9</sup> underlines the learner centrality; again, Toriello (2005) emphasizes that the European Union today confirms periodically, through its official documents, that the principles of Lifelong Learning should be the learner centrality and the quality of the learning activity<sup>10</sup>. According to Trilla Bernet (1993), Lifelong Learning must be separated from the past, which conceived it as a sector, a type or a stage of the educational field; though taking care of its

independence, it must be ready to eventual collaborations and contaminations.

The evolution of the Lifelong Learning theories to international level is nearly completely responsibility of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) activity. The history is very interesting but this is not the place to tell it, we only need a brief overview on the fundamental stages of the process. Lifelong Learning appears as a fundamental objective for the members from the Conference of Montreal (1960), while in the previous one (1949) the application of it was limited to only Western Europe. After the Conference of Tokyo in 1972, where the debate was focused on practical possible applications, a great goal has been achieved in Nairobi (1976): finally, the reform of the educational system was at first place, considering learning as something which goes beyond time, place, age limits. From this starting point, UNESCO policies focused and continue to focus their attention on these aspects and, above all, on the concrete realization of specific projects. We must remember two fundamental figures of this process: Edgar Faure and Jacques Delors. The first one was the author of "Learning to be: the world of education today and tomorrow" (1972); Faure considers education as a global process in which lifelong learning become a sort of "symbol", including all the forms, expressions and moments of the educative action. The 1996 is the "International Year of Lifelong Learning": Jacques Delors superintends the "International Commission for the Twenty-first Century"; the final act of it, "Learning: the treasure within", emphasizes the importance of four pillars of the human knowledge during all the life:

- ★learning to know;
- ★learning to do;
- ★learning to live together;
- ★learning to be.

From the Official International Documents and from the pedagogy, Lifelong Learning is considered now a priority, at the macro-level of the Knowledge Society, and at the micro-level of the individual and personal growth too.

### **1.3. The economic and technological weight**

According to De Gregorio (2000), Basili (1998) and Allendez (2004), today the real value of information and communication must be measured through economic parameters and estimated as decisive factor in the economic development.

The economic dimension is widely considered also by Official Documents, in which this element constantly appears in connection with the urgency required by the progression of technology. The "White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment" (1993) describes the fundamental change of our era as follows:

"(...) The economy is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, (...) the possession and transmission of information is becoming crucial to success", and again, about ICT, "ICTs are transforming dramatically many aspects of economic and social life. The competitiveness of the European economy will to a great extent depend both on the conditions of utilization and on the development and application of these technologies". Lifelong Learning is seen as the possible solution for this difficult situation<sup>11</sup>.

The same urgency in economic terms is confirmed during the Lisbon Council (2000)<sup>12</sup>, in which government leaders tried to establish a mission of ten years to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

Angori (2003) denounces a dangerous gap: in the anxiety of defining every phenomenon in its concrete application, we are losing the real aim of education and learning in general, the human dimension. Similarly, Toriello (2005) warns that considering learning only connected to the employment problem has the risk to reduce it as a simple training offer. Additionally, Farinelli (2005) underlines that learning as fundamental tool to people growth cannot be based only on an economic theory. The European Commission Communication "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a reality" (2001) moves in the same direction, towards a semantic and conceptual valorization of the cultural and spiritual dimension of learning.

According to Dixon (2000) and Ransom (1992), a educational reform based exclusively on the economic needs of a nation leads unavoidably to the aggravation of the informative gap; as Coffield (1994) asserts, the educational reform must be based on moral imperatives, in the promise not only of an economic regeneration, but above all of our entire public sphere.

#### **1.4. The Information Overload phenomenon**

The White Paper on Education and Training (1996) asserts that in a very near future, the role of the Information Society to inform its own members will be implicit in the daily life. The individual will be therefore "attacked" by a profusion of fragmentary, incomplete and discontinuous informations, perceived in a chaotic and confused way. The risk, therefore, is a society divided into those who have the right tools to interpret the reality, those who know only how to use these tools and those who assist passively to the changes. According to Salarelli (2002), this informative revolution involves not only people working every day in close connection with the information universe, but it's a wider question which affects the whole society. The phenomenon called "Information Overload" appears in the literature in 1970. The term, coined by Alvin Toffler, was connected with the concept of "Future Shock": the great social structural change will leave people "disconnected", suffering "stress and disorientation".

Lengrand (1975) asserts that adult people are living in a completely different world from that of their infancy; this sensation of "disorientation" which is a very constant psychological phenomenon nowadays seems to be a natural law. Again Salarelli (2000), underlines that the real problem of the contemporary age is not the access to the information but the capacity to use this information, the "know-how". The concept of "Information Overload" can be discussed from various points of view; considering the fact objectively, some authors, such as Galbraith (1974) and Tushman & Hadler (1978) states that the phenomenon occurs when the information processing requirements exceed the information processing capacity; "requirements" and "capacities" refer to the quantitative dimension, so, when the individual's capacities allow a smaller amount of information regarding to the whole information available in a precise time, the Information Overload is the consequence<sup>13</sup>. Many authors consider the question from a more subjective point of view: O'Reilly (1980) and Lesca & Lesca (1993) underline feelings of stress, confusion, anxiety and pressure as crucial prerogatives - but effects too!- of the Information Overload. In the Library world, it's recognized that the rhythms of human physiology do not march of equal step with the production of new information. The librarians are been more and more involved into this phenomenon. According to Salarelli (2005), two are the fundamental causes; first of all, the excessive amount of information available today: the issue becomes complicated for librarians, called to be human filters, selecting information by quality. The second cause is represented by the roles that today librarian must cover. The great structures can afford many persons for many tasks; small libraries instead are often managed by not many persons (often only one person!), who are responsible of loan, user assistance, acquisition policies, and so on. The solution cannot be the refusal, we cannot close the door to the news, but at the same time we cannot presume to be omniscient, being disappointed when the reality demonstrates unavoidably the contrary. Salarelli (2002) suggests the more effective way to avoid Information Overload and its consequences for librarians: to redefine our professional identity, trying to gain from it renewed inspiration and energy, always aiming at the same, our users' satisfaction.

### **1.5. Lifelong Learning and Librarianship: an international overview**

The analysis of the literature demonstrates that today Librarianship universe is perfectly aware of the urgency of Lifelong Learning for its members. Duncan Smith (1993) talks about the urgency of a greening in our professional field, declaring with disarming clarity that "in order to survive and remain relevant, in order to continue to be a

viable and contributing part of our society, the profession must change"

At international level, two main organisms coordinate the activities about this inseparable binomial: libraries/Lifelong Learning: CLENERT and CPERT.

CLENERT (Continuing Library Education and Networking Exchange Round Table) is part of ALA (American Library Association) from 1984, with a recently modernized Statute from 2003<sup>14</sup>. This organism considers Lifelong Learning in libraries' world as a process to keep up to date our competencies. According to Conroy (1977)<sup>15</sup> it's a wider and more specialistic concept than that of "Staff Development".

CPERT (Continuing Professional Education Round Table) is part of IFLA and it has been instituted in 1985, during the "First World Conference on Continuing Education for the Library and Information Science profession". Lifelong Learning, according to IFLA policies, must not only prepare professionals for new responsibilities and new abilities but it must make sure that they are correctly applied in the daily professional reality, with immediate advantages for individual and for organization. According to Stone (1986) and Webb (1986), therefore, we must consider as Lifelong Learning activities all formal and informal initiatives, carried out by professionals, to keep up to date at professional and human levels.

The actual debate focuses on the responsibility of Lifelong Learning: is it Library's duty or individual's duty? Many authors, such as Stone (1986) and Kniffel (2001) think that Lifelong Learning must be professionals' responsibility, not their institutions'. This idea is confirmed by the National Council on Quality Continuing Education for Library, Information and Media Personnel: continuing education is a consequence of personal needs. However, the idea of sharing responsibilities is more diffused. Villagrà (1997) underlines that a professional able to face changes, to solve problems, to improve its skills referring to the situation is a benefit for the organization and for the whole society; again, Weingrand (1991) writes: "the seeds of tomorrow are indeed sowed in the activities of today; professional success depends upon total involvement in the continuum of professional library education".

So, as information professionals, according to Tammaro (1999b) we must "learn to learn" and understand that only with a continuous modernization of our competences and our skills we can improve the quality of our job; on the other side, the organizations, private or public, to which we offer our services, have the duty to assist our growth, transforming it in long-lasting benefits for the whole staff.

## **2. The great paradox: being librarians today**

### **2.1. Libraries today, tradition versus change**

*The Library is a growing organism*

Ranganathan

The literature is unanimous: the main cause of change in libraries is the technology development. Lancaster (1997) treat with great precision the implications of this change, talking about some defensive barriers which traditional libraries, barricaded into their role of conservation of the cultural patrimony, has erected in the vain hope of protection from evolution. Today this phase can be considered exceeded, at least to organizational level, even if, in many cases, the problem still remains to the single professional level. Salarelli and Tammaro (2000) describe very clearly the new horizons of the library today, insisting on the movement of the paradigm from the possession to the access and on the user centrality: the user must be our starting point and our final aim at the same time. In fact, the library today is a service and its survival and success are measured through a "customer evaluation". During last years, some attempts to crystallize the new image of the library in a definition have been carried out: Rowley (1998)<sup>16</sup> talks about "Electronic Library"; Rusbridge (1998)<sup>17</sup> underlines the "Hybrid Library" dimension; Gopen (1998)<sup>18</sup> prefers the term "Virtual Library" which is a sort of Berners Lee's "heir", the inventor of World Wide Web; Atkinson (1996)<sup>19</sup> uses the adjective "Digital". The great debate of the literature today is about the relationship between these new definitions of library and the tradition, which must evolve but be respected at the same time. Two are the main tend: the more limited vision of a Digital Library as an evolution of services, structures and aims of the traditional one; on the other side, the identification between Digital and Virtual Library and World Wide Web. We completely share Tammaro's opinion: the "Virtual Library" is the whole World Wide Web, in which there are "oasis" of order and persistence called "Digital Libraries". We think, following Salarelli and Tammaro (2000) that, quite a part from different definitions, the Digital Library as a concept has the great prerogative to demand integration and collaboration among various professional figures, giving a strong input to the debat about the meaning and implications of being librarians nowadays.

## 2.2. Librarians and "attitude of mind": the debate of '80 and '90

The literature, therefore, emphasizes and exalts the parallelism between the evolution of the library from a place of conservation to an access point to the information world, and the evolution of our profession. Years '80 and '90 have been strongly marked by the debate about the acceptance of technological development and the so-called "dis-intermediation".

### ➔ Resistance to technology

According to Katsirikou (1999), in the most of cases technological innovation goes into libraries without a clear introduction or antecedents: it's an inevitable presence. In the '70, libraries and librarians were not prepared for the news, neither professionally neither humanly. The first reaction was the "resistance to technology", described by Lancaster (1997) in several forms:

"decline in quantity or quality of work, unwillingness to change or to learn, absenteeism or lateness, problems of behaviour (apathy, boredom, negativism, withdrawal or even aggression), and, in extreme cases, physiological problems such as headache, nausea or high blood pressure".

This phenomenon can have some positive consequences; following Fine (1986), the tension between who refuses and who exalts the innovation can be very stimulating for the growth of the library as Learning Organization.

Olsgaard (1984) states that the acceptance of new technology depends in wide part on the way in which the library is organized: if the degree of staff involvement in decisions-making activities is high, it's easier to accept changes more serenely.

Cobada Arenal (2001) and Tammaro (1996)<sup>20</sup> confirm that we must accept the change to survive; Fourie (2001) indicates the way to do it correctly: adopting a free and conscious spirit of adaptability to the situation. It's the same "attitude of mind", open to change, collaboration and evolution, which Lancaster (1997) talks about.

Similarly, Gómez and Montaña (1998)<sup>21</sup> and Alfino and Pierce (2001) underline the importance to recognize the librarian as the key professional figure to the development of actual society.

### ➔ Redundancy Theory

In Italy, we talk about the phenomenon of "disintermediazione"; in the USA the literature calls it "Redundancy Theory". We must remember Clay Hathorn (1997) and his article "The librarian is dead, long live the librarian" in which the author, confronting different theories about the role which librarians have to play nowadays, lays down the end of a life, passed collecting and ordering books, and the beginning of a new one, in which librarians are the responsible in finding and evaluating

informations.

The theory of dis-intermediation was based on the idea that users will be able, thanks to new technologies, to satisfy their own information needs, without librarians' help. According to Basili (1994) and Minetto (1997), we think that this vision arises from a wrong and limited analysis. Additionally, Banchieri (1997)<sup>22</sup> clarifies that the idea of a total abolition of libraries and librarians depends on unrealistic assumptions: in fact, it would be necessary that all the world-wide information was in digital form and that everyone, quite apart from economic and social conditions, has the concrete possibility to approach it. Moreover, admitting that the most information today is directly produced in digital form, the author remembers that the problem of the conversion -from paper to digital- of the great amount of data produced in the past, remains. Consequently, talking about "iper-mediation" seems therefore more realistic; according to Ridi (1998)<sup>23</sup> the information-routes increase, the research and evaluation methods become more complicated: in this maze of data, librarian plays a privileged role.

### **2.3. Ethic values to solve identity crisis**

*We must be proud to be librarians*

*Barbara J. Ford<sup>24</sup>*

Before entering in the actual debate, we want to summarize some reflections of the specific literature carried out in the past and apparently solved. About the anachronistic anxiety to insert the librarian in the humanistic or scientific field, considering the impossibility, by now, to trace a clean line of demarcation between these environments, according to Revelli (1995) the harmony is the secret; similarly, Tees (1991) asserts that "harmonization may be an idea whose time is now or never". According to D'Alessandro (2003) and Balino (2002), beyond respective peculiarities which will continue to distinguish a librarian from an archivist and a cataloguer, these professions must understand they are sharing a common land of interests and aims, adding value to this community, to gain from it the greater possible profit, finally realizing the "leit motiv" of the literature in '90: the cooperation.

During last years, some attempts to coin new denominations for the librarian profession have been carried out; terms such as "information scientist" and "information manager" are now very diffused. Tamaro (1995) has created "cybrarian", a term derived from the fusion of "cyberman" and "librarian", which perhaps better indicates the evolution of the profession referring to the technological development. The urgency today goes beyond the

possible definitions and it moves towards concrete aims and functions of our profession.

Old questions need new answers: what does it mean being librarians today? What does it imply? It's a very difficult issue: according to Alfino and Pierce (2001) and Fernandez Molina<sup>25</sup> (2000) the better way to find an answer is to focus on the ethical values for librarians.

The literature on librarian ethics and values can be reduced to two fundamental arguments. The first is that Information Professionals are a diverse group, so it's not possible to identify a single set of values: Kirk and Poston (1990) and Berleur and Brunnstein (1996) follow this orientation. Conversely, Dole, Hurych and Koehler (2001) adopt the second approach: much of the perceived difference among various value systems held by Information Professionals is more perception and emphasis rather than real difference. In fact, librarians share a common set of core values:

- intellectual freedom;
- protecting user's right to privacy/ confidentiality;
- intellectual property rights;
- professional neutrality;
- preservation of the cultural record;
- equity of access.

In last years, according to Lancaster (1997), the library profession has crossed through a periode of considerable change: as explained in the previous paragraph, Lifelong Learning is today a recognized urgency. Ethical Codes, nowadays, have inserted among their articles some fundamental references to this field, in the Anglo-Saxon world above all.

The American Library Association's Code of Ethic" states: "we strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhacing our own knowledge and skills".

Again, The "British Library Association's Code of Ethics" asserts that members must be competent in their professional activities; similarly, the "Australian Library and Information Association's Statement of Professional Ethics" exalts Lifelong Learning as the only one way to ensure excellence in the profession.

In truth, according to McKee (2001)<sup>26</sup>, our purpose, our aim in society don't change. In fact, the new Information Professional will do in the future what our profession has always done: add value<sup>27</sup> by giving people access to knowledge. Only the activities we undertake to deliver that purpose have changed radically in recent years. Additionally, Barajas and Sánchez (2005)<sup>28</sup> confirm that the fundamental mission of our daily activity will be always the users' satisfaction.

We think that librarians can finally save themselves from the crisis of identity they are actually crossing by considering this continuum with the past, trying to find in Librarianship history the self esteem and professional dignity they have lost. During the time, librarians of all the world had to face changes: perhaps the age we are living in is the most complicated, but history demonstrates that we have tools and capacities to survive; we have

to believe in our mission, to be proud of being what we really are, "the most well positioned professionals to make change effective", as Baró and Cosials (2003) assert. According to Kalyane and Kalyane (1992), "we frequently handicap ourselves by our own self image"; similarly, Tammaro (1999) denounces that very often librarians are inclined to isolate themselves in a Library-centered vision, complaining at the same time about the poor consideration of which they are victim. A cultural change is urgent: the passage to a anthropocentric mentality will finally return to the librarian and to the library the cultural dimension which belongs to them. Kandemir (2003) inserts "creativity" and "dynamism" among skills required for the "modern librarian"; Salarelli (2000) points out two key attitudes: "vocation and willingness"<sup>29</sup> and Gómez and Montaña (1998)<sup>30</sup> talk about "capacities to create", "restlessness to learn" and "imagination".

#### **2.4. "New" professions or evolution of old figures?**

*The real voyage of discovery  
consists not in seeking new landscapes,  
but in having new eyes.*

Marcel Proust

Due to ICT rapid development, logically libraries need new specialized professional figures. We are thinking about a professional able to constantly assist the remote-user: it is a sort of evolution of the classic reference librarian with wider communication skills. Similarly, the organizer of Internet resources can be considered as a sort of old cataloguer's "son", but this new figure is more than this. Dallape Matson and Bonski (1997) introduce a very innovative role: the creator of system interfaces, able to evaluate actual systems and to improve them with some technical skills which librarians today cannot have. Well, what about reference librarians and cataloguers in the traditional sense? The answer is unanimous: they are living in a different environment, but they survive. Cataloguers, particularly, are crossing a very dangerous period. Revelli (1997) even questions himself about their survival. According to Balsamo (1989) the last aim of cataloguing has been and will always be to facilitate the finding of the document and the information. The idea of extinction is therefore unthinkable: also in this case, following Le Crosnier (1997), we must talk about necessary evolution. The direction in which today we must move is clearly explained by Salarelli (1997): a theory of a flexible cataloguing must be devised; it must be able to adapt itself to a reality which is various and in constant change. Tammaro (1997)<sup>31</sup> describes the new environment of

"metacataloguing", that is the use of metadata to catalogue electronic documents.

According to Ridi (1997)<sup>32</sup> and Biddiscombe (1996), reference librarians can be considered as directed intermediaries between specific user's requirements and the potential information which he/she needs. Following Aghemo's (1995) opinion, this service has therefore been the first to meet the technological development. Diozzi (1993)<sup>33</sup> talks about the urgency of "integration" of information sources as a possible way to survive for reference librarians: they have to learn how to manage different informations on different supports. Banchieri (1997) underlines that nowadays reference librarians is a consultant and interpreter, filling the difference between users and technological infrastructure. This is not a new profession, it's simply the evolution of an old one, but there is an "added value" to the reference service: the educational issue. According to Gatti (1997) today users go to library not to make up for what they don't have in their home private libraries, but to easily and quickly find what they need in that specific moment. We are describing a new dimension for libraries: the real possibility to evolve to Learning Organizations.

So, the reference librarians seem to find, through this close connection with the educational field and the potentiality of the technological universe, a renewed vigor.

The debate about this new environment focuses on the definition of this educational task: what we, as Information Professionals, are expecting to teach? What we, as librarians, are able to teach?

Ridi (1996) asserts that our task is to teach how to do a research, using all types of sources, but we cannot teach our users how to use operative systems and word processors.

Conversely, if the aim of libraries is to create a connection between users and every type of documents, Le Crosnier (1997), Arnold (1999) and Bawden (2002) affirm that libraries cannot limit themselves to offering the simple access to technological world (Internet connection and some computers): they have to explain to users how to use and enjoy these new tools. According to Revelli (1998), if librarians don't understand their responsibilities in this case, the risk is to create a strong division between people who have the economic possibility to learn everything out of the library and people who don't have the same opportunity. Similarly, Lozano Diaz (2005) asserts that librarians have to reduce the divide between rich information people and the poor too.

Although some authors, such as Salarelli (2005), still show resistance to the idea of the librarian-educator, adducing fears about the weight of new responsibilities and the lack of precise criteria in the definition of librarians identity, this issue is widely diffused and shared at international level.

Baró and Cosials (2003) assert that librarians are the most well positioned teachers to make effective the role of the Library in the educational process. According to Dowlin (2000) librarians have the opportunity, thanks to their mentality and capacities, to stimulate and effectively support the process of their

institutions to become Learning Centers. Again, Wengert (2001) states that stressing the role of librarians as teachers will lead to a richer and more realistic ethical conversation.

We want to conclude this paragraph with a very stimulating point of view: according to Bundy (1999) education is not a choice for librarians, is a duty, because every library and every librarian has an educational role to play in our society and if they do not, they deny their calling and responsibility to their community. In 1935, Ortega y Gasset asserted that in order to determine the librarians mission we don't have to start from the man who exercises it and neither from an abstract ideal which is expected to define once for all what a library is and what being librarians means, but from the social necessity to which our profession answers. This necessity, the author concludes, as all the human things, cannot be fixed and stable in the time and in the space; it is by nature variable, in evolution, historical. We think therefore that it's our duty to answer to the social questions of our historical age: Information Literacy is today our professional core.

## **2.5. Information Literacy**

Reviewing specific literature about alternative words and phrases used (e.g. "Information Competency", "Information Mediacy", "Information Skills"), Bawden (2001b) shows that "Information Literacy" is the most commonly used phrase to describe the concept, demonstrating at the same time that much of the literature about it has been produced by librarians. It's not by chance!

First of all, we must underline, according to Candy (2002) that Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning are "inextricably intertwined". This approach has two consequent issues:

- people must have access to needed information;
- people must be able to judge the quality of information.

Additionally, Andretta (2004) sees Information Literacy as the foundation of Independent Learning.

Before entering into the close connection between Information Literacy; Lifelong Learning and Librarianship, we should remember Paul Zurkowsky (1974), who used the term for the first time, writing "people trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literates. They have learned techniques and skills for using the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to their problems".

We can create an immediate association of ideas: according to Arnold (1999) the role of librarian is actually focused on analysis and evaluation rather than on management of information. So, a librarian must be Information Literate to carry out its tasks correctly. We can take a step forward: librarian as educator must be able to teach how to become Information Literate.

We have to begin with considering the concept from a wider perspective; following Abdelaziz's opinion, "Information Literacy is a part of the basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world to freedom of expression and the right to information, and it's instrumental in building and sustaining democracy". Again, the author confirms the link with the educational field: "Information Literacy is concerned with teaching and learning about the whole range of information sources and formats", describing as Information Literate a person who knows "why, when and how to use all of these tools, thinking critically about the information they provide".

Most definitions, including the last one, focuses on individual; defining the concept, they start trying to describe who can be called "Information Literate".

The ALA (American Library Association) in 1984 stated: "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information". Similarly, Doyle (1992) thinks that Information Literate, among many abilities<sup>34</sup>, must first of all recognize the need for information, being able to find and evaluate all types of resources. Again, Lenox (1993) asserts that Information Literate has the analytical and critical skills to formulate research questions and to evaluate results, accessing to a variety of resources to meet the needed information.

Conversely, Shapiro and Hughes (1996) have a broader approach, considering Information Literacy as a "new liberal art", able to investigate information also to its social, cultural and even philosophical context. This social aspect is underlined by Webber and Johnson (2003) too: "Information Literacy is the adoption of appropriate information behaviour to identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs, leading to wise and ethical use of information in society".

Librarianship universe nowadays has finally recognized the issue as a unavoidable starting point to delineate future policies. IFLA has a Information Literacy Section which previously was called "User Education Round Table": this is a very meaningful fact. According to its Web presentation, this Section focuses on all aspects of Information Literacy, including user education, learning style, and, among other tasks what we consider most important: "the training of librarians in teaching information and technical skills". User education and librarian education become parts of a wider concept which allows us to return to our starting point: the library as a Learning Organization.

At international levels, some standards about Information Literacy have been carried out. We want to underline the ALA Standards (2000)<sup>35</sup> and the Australian Standards (2001): the comparison between them emphasizes some important points. The Australian approach is more and more inclusive: ALA addresses its recommendations only to students, while the attention of the Australian experts is on the person, without other specifications. Australian Standards add a seventh point which is for use a very

pleasant confirmation: "The Information Literate person recognises that Lifelong Learning and participative citizenship require Information Literacy".

The English SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries)<sup>36</sup> connects Information Literacy with the opportunity to create something new; the Seventh Pillar states that Information Literate must have "the ability to synthesize and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge", that is what in a world, referring to the new librarian's role, we called "creativity"!

Through the analysis of standards which seem to describe the tasks previously attributed to the librarian of our age, it's now easy to answer the question we placed at the end of this paragraph: it's not by case! Librarianship and Information Literacy share a common land, about competencies, aims and methods. So, we must reflect on this association, because this is the key of our profession nowadays: if we want to make the idea of Library as a Learning Organization real, we must diffuse Information Literacy issue, learning to learn continuously and to teach our users to do the same.

## **2.6. The Reflective Practitioner**

The reflective praxis, with the close connection between theory and practice, had been philosophically developed by Aristotele. After many centuries, this connection resists and it seems to find constant confirmation. During the time, many authors have used it to reduce the distance between ideas and their concrete application.

John Dewey and his "How we think" (1933) represent the most significant step to the development of educational thinking in the twentieth century. Dewey's philosophical pragmatism, concern with interaction, reflection and experience, and interest in community and democracy, became a "myth": its greater merit was just the application of the Aristotelian theory to the educational field. The aim was always the same: to find an effective and fast solution to problems.

Donald Schön, fifty years after, applied Dewey's theory to the Information environment. Two concepts are central for Schön: "reflection in action" and "reflection on action". According to Usher (1997), reflecting on action means "looking to our experiences, connecting with our feelings, and attending to our theories in use".

Schön (1983) considers the Reflective Praxis as the way in which the practical professional will be able to extract and to separate the theory from the practice, learning therefore from the action: "The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understanding which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new

understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation". A further application of this method to the Information Profession has been carried out by Wallace. According to him (1991), "reflection" is an interaction between the professional and the situation. He uses the term "beyond reflection on", emphasizing the exploration of both the role and the potential role of the information professional today.

Additionally, Perrone (2004) asserts that "expert is generally seen as someone with a specialist knowledge or a high level of ability in a particular skill", weighing up the nature of "expertise", which "is about possessing knowledge or skills putting this knowledge into practice", that is what we normally call problem solving abilities.

According to Pat Dixon (2000), today information professional must analyse the context in which they are operating, understanding what can be an advantage and what can be an obstacle, always focusing on user's needs. The first step we have to take is to reflect on our role, on our potentialities, finding, once again, an harmony between them. Following Lupton's (2002) opinion librarians are often unconscious protagonists of a very important change of role, from service providers to educators. Librarians who design and deliver Information Literacy programmes must reflect and see themselves as teachers rather than trainers, encouraging a culture of reflective practice among colleagues and among users.

### **Some conclusive reflections**

We don't want to use the term "conclusions", which seems to mark a line of too much definitive demarcation; we prefer "reflections", thinking about the future possibilities to analyse more in detail some interesting starting points we have discovered during our work.

At the beginning of our Literature Review, we ask ourselves to find, if and where possible, concrete solution to the great paradox of our profession: we live in the Information Society, but as Information Professionals we don't have the adequate identity. Well, we have emphasized some possible ways to follow, through ethic values, moral imperatives, comparison with a glorious past; one field, among and beyond all the others, seems to be today very fertile: the educational one.

Let's analyze together some elements, originated from our Literature Review, which need deeper investigation and some explanations.

- ➔ Contemporary literature well understands the close relationship between Learning Society and Librarianship, emphasizing the double dimension of this fruitful connection: Lifelong Learning for librarians and Lifelong Learning for users. Perhaps, also considering both aspects, nowadays user education is the

fundamental core. Remembering Tammaro (1999) and Dixon (2000), we advise about the possible danger of this idea: as information professionals, we cannot learn to teach, if we before have not learnt to learn! So, our final aim remains users, but we don't have to forget that to achieve it, the first step is change our mentality.

- ➔ It's universally recognized the definition of library as a Learning Organization but we have not found, during the analysis of literature, examples of the concrete application of this vision to the daily reality. It would be interesting, for future researches, to focus on this aspect. Theoretically, all works perfectly, but what about the practice?
- ➔ Reflecting on the economic weight, we have found some interesting elements. It's true that today we are rich only if we are able to find, access, manage and evaluate information (that is being Information Literate!), but Information, as everything in this world, has a cost. Also, the price of information goes up every day, but we must pay that price! It's strange and illogical, in our opinion, that most literature about the economic aspect in libraries has been written up by academic researchers, persons who in many cases don't have a direct work experience in a library. It's not a question of competences, we don't want to discuss them; it's the possibility to analyze the problem from a internal and more realistic perspective. We have this perspective, we work in a small library every day, and we know that the war between what sounds wonderful in theory and what is too much complicated to achieve in the practice is still open. We agree with the need to look at the issue from a wider point of view, we agree with the very noble aims of ethic values and moral imperatives, believing in our potentialities, but we cannot shelve a very urgent problem, above all for small institutions: the lack of funds.
- ➔ Librarians' attitude of minds must change: the verdict of the literature is unanimous. The debate is about the ways and methods to do it. We think we have been able to overview all possible aspects of the issue. First of all, librarians must have a strong and power sense of identity: this is the absolute starting point. To achieve it, Information Professionals can look at their past, emphasizing the continuity of aims and functions, the inheritance of a consolidated tradition; on the other side, we can look at the future, emphasizing on the contrary the breaking with a too coercive past. In truth, we think that the way for finding a new, or better renewed, identity is not so important: what is fundamental is the goal, that is understanding we have a really powerful role to play in the society we're living in.
- ➔ Well, we can draw up an only one real "conclusion", which is very simple to write but more and more difficult to make real:

library as a Learning Organization can become a reality (library must become it!) only if, as Reflective Information Practitioners, as librarians proud of our role, we will be able to diffuse among colleagues and, above all, among users Information Literacy. From the reviewing of literature, we are inclined to consider this way the more effective opportunity to make up the lost time. So, stop to the useless research of definitions and open ways to our "creativity"! We can reinvent our profession, our dignity, and the educational urgency offers today to us an unlosable opportunity: let's enjoy it! It's on us!

- <sup>1</sup> The Schon's theory begins with the loss of the "stable state", which implies some consequences, first of all the necessity of a change in our behaviour: "The loss of the stable state means that our society and all of its institutions are in *continuous* processes of transformation.(...) We must learn to understand, guide, influence and manage these transformations. We must, in other words, become adept at learning".  
In the Schon's same period, Hutchins (1970) looked to the Ancient Greece as a model of society with a deep sense of civilization, in which the education and the reflection were fundamental pillars: "education was not a segregated activity, conducted for certain hours, in certain places, at a certain time of life. It was the aim of the Society", p.33.
- <sup>2</sup> Pedler (1991) considers the Learning Organization a vision of what might be possible, but he lists some unavoidable conditions: "(...) It's not brought about simply by training individuals; it can only happens as a result of learning at whole organization level. A Learning Organization is an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself".
- <sup>3</sup> Watkins and Marsick (1992) stress staff involvements as prerequisite to a real Learning Organization: "Learning Organizations are characterized by total employee involvement in a process of collaboratively conducted, collectively accountable change directed towards shared values or principles", p.118.
- <sup>4</sup> "Learning Organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are matured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning to see the whole together", p.3.
- <sup>5</sup> Boundy denounces the fault of Education in its traditional sense: "None of the three levels of Formal Education (primary, secondary, tertiary) has really grasped the implications of a world which has a surfeit of data and informations, or the impossibility of sustaining Lifelong Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without Information Literacy".
- <sup>6</sup> Again, following the Memorandum (2000): "The continuum of lifelong and lifewide learning also means that the different levels and sectors of education and training systems, including no formal domain, must work in close concertation with each other".
- <sup>7</sup> Resman (2003) introduces his reasoning in this way: "Lifelong Learning huhu-what's that? (...) To some authors it's adult leisure education. To others it's University-Industry partnership and Continuing Education for empolyment and employability. To yet others it's the practical application of Open and Distance Education and Training with sophisticated feedback systems. For me, it's certainly all of those things, but much, much more".
- <sup>8</sup> Gross (1997) gives this type of definition for the Lifelong Learning: "Learning that is self-directed and extends traditional education systems, encouraging individuals to become independent learners".
- <sup>9</sup> Candy (1991) describes the issue as follows: "Lifelong Learning takes, as one of its principal aims, equipping people with skills and competencies required to continue their own *self-education* beyond the end of formal schooling", p.15.
- <sup>10</sup> The Memorandum (2000) throws out six key messages about Lifelong Learning:

  - new basic skills for all;
  - more investment in human resources;
  - innovation in teaching and learning;
  - valuing Learning;
  - rethinking guidance and counselling;
  - bringing learning closer to home.
- <sup>11</sup> The "White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment: the challenges and ways forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (1993) is only about "enemployment", but it's interesting to underline the clear reference to the educative field in 7<sup>th</sup> chapter: "Education and Training are expected to solve the problems of the competitiveness of business, the employment crisis and the tragedy of

social exclusion and marginality- in a word, they are expected to help society to overcome its present difficulties and to control the profound changes which it is currently undergoing". Among priorities for action on job, European Commission puts at first place Lifelong Education and Training, defining the first one as "the overall objective to which the national educational communities can make their own contributions".

<sup>12</sup> During this Council in Lisbon (2000), European Communities aim to the realization of a powerful "knowledge-based economy (...) capable of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion".

<sup>13</sup> The time factor is underlined by Schick (1990) too, but it's not the only one to be considered; the qualitative dimension focuses its attention on the characteristics of Information: Keller & Staelin (1987) and Schneider (1987) talk about usefulness, level of novelty, ambiguity, uncertainty, intensity and complexity of the information as elements which must be analysed. Following the Eppler's and Mengis's Literature Review (2003), we find a very useful explanation about causes, effects and possible solutions. The causes can be about the information itself -quantity, quality, frequency- or the person receiving it (Kock, 2001), they can refer to the work environment or to the technological one (Bawden, 2001).

The Information Overload is the result of a mix of these possible causes. Among the effects, we can recognize inefficient work, demotivatation, lack of perspective at individual level, and limited search directions, difficulties to reach target groups, loss of control on the information and loss of critical evaluation of it at the organizational level. There are some countermeasures which we can adopt to prevent the risks of the Information Overload. We have analysed the specific literature about possible ways to avoid Information Overload. Improving personal time management skills and techniques and training programs to augment information literacy could represent, according to Bawden (2001), very important factors at professional level. Similarly, Allert (2001) considers some possible solutions connected with the characteristics of information, such as defining quality through the promulgation of shared rules for the diffusion and creation of information and communication. Again, Tushman and Nadler (1978) propose coordination at organizational dimension, Galbraith (1974) talks about the creation of lateral relationships and Schneider (1987) asserts the importance to reduce divergence among people through socialization.

<sup>14</sup> The four fundamental aims of the Round Table are:  
- to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and concerns among continuing library education, training and staff development;  
- to provide learning activities and material to maintain the competencies of those who provide continuing library education;  
- to provide a force for initiating and supporting programs to increase the availability of quality continuing education;  
- to create an awareness of, and need of, continuing library education on the part of employees and employers.

The Statute is available on line at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/clenert/clenebylaws/bylaws.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Although they can appear extremely connected until being confused in many occasions, Lifelong Learning and Staff Training are concepts that have different matrices and means. We agree with Barbara Conroy's (1977) opinion: the Staff-training is aimed above all to upgrade the abilities of an organization, in order to complete its mission with greater efficiency and effectiveness, through the improvement of the staff skills; Lifelong Learning represents instead the activities that the individuals realize in order to grow at personal and professional level.

<sup>16</sup> In the first chapter of her "The Electronic Library", Jennifer Rowley (1998) realizes a brief literature review about the topic. Following her text, Oppenheim (1997) see the Electronic Library as "an organized and managed collection of information in a variety of media (...) but all in digital form". Trolley (1995) consider it "the common vision of librarians, publishers, technology experts and researcher of access to all information, anywhere, anytime". Referring to the debate about physical or digital collections, the author states: "My vision is of a multimedia library which reflects the different forms and formats that its community find convenient

for communication and storage. Not all information or documents will be in digital form, and not all will be available for access over digital networks", p.4.

- <sup>17</sup> Chris Rusbridge (1998) defines the "Hybrid Library" as follows: "the hybrid library was designed to bring a range of technologies from different sources together in the context of a working library, and also to begin the explore integrated systems and services in both the electronic and print environments. The hybrid library should integrate access to all different kinds of resources, using different technologies from the digital library world, and across different media. The name hybrid library is intended to reflect the transitional state of the library, which today can neither be fully printed nor fully digital".
- <sup>18</sup> Kaye Gopen emphasizes the dimension of a Virtual Library, able to cancel physical distances: "the Virtual Library has been defined as the concept of remote access to the contents and services of libraries and other information resources, combining an on-site collection of current and heavily used materials in both print and electronic form, with an electronic network which provide access to, and of delivery from, external worldwide library and commercial information and knowledge sources. In essence, the user is provided the effect of a library which is a synergy created by bringing together technologically the resources of many, many libraries and information services", p. 2.
- <sup>19</sup> Ross Atkinson agrees on Tammaro's vision, considering Digital Library as a controlled and monitored zone of Internet, where we can find digital resources, clearly organized by qualified professionals. Similarly, Michael Lesk (1997) considers it as a collection of digitalized and arranged information.
- <sup>20</sup> In the article "Il futuro della biblioteca è ICT", Anna Maria Tammaro (1996) confirms the urgency of a change in librarians' mentality, recognizing the new role of their work in a technological environment: "Bisognerà (...) abituarsi a pensare alla biblioteca nell'ambito dell'innovazione delle telecomunicazioni: la biblioteca non più come luogo fisico, ma biblioteca virtuale o elettronica (...) come punto d'accesso ai sistemi informativi locali e mondiali, aperta alle nuove esigenze della società dell'informazione".
- <sup>21</sup> Muñoz Gómez and Rubiano Montaña (1998) state the importance of librarians today: "(...) parece evidente la existencia cada vez más importante de la figura del bibliotecario digital como elemento clave para el desarrollo de la sociedad actual (...). Los bibliotecarios hoy día tienen que asegurar que todos los documentos estarán disponibles en todo momento y desde cualquier lugar. La biblioteca digital necesita de bibliotecarios digitales pues no pueden ser construidas, gestionadas y preservadas sin la ayuda de estos profesionales (...) Los bibliotecarios tienen cada vez más importancia en cualquier sector de la sociedad que se ve desbordado por la cantidad de información que le rodea". This is a very important paper, referring to the absolute necessity of professional figures, as librarians, in the actual era.
- <sup>22</sup> We quote Anna Banchieri's (1997) in her original language: "L'idea della totale soppressione delle biblioteche è comunque legata ad una serie di supposizioni sovente poco valide e realistiche. Sarebbe infatti innanzitutto necessario che tutta l'informazione mondiale, presente e passata, fosse in forma digitale ed accessibile a tutti, indipendentemente dallo stato sociale e dalle disponibilità economiche. Se è vero che gran parte dell'informazione corrente è direttamente prodotta in forma digitale, quale parte del processo di pubblicazione, esiste tuttavia il problema di riconvertire l'enorme quantità di dati elaborati finora esclusivamente su carta", p.37.
- <sup>23</sup> Describing the passage to the Internet model of working, Ridi exalts the mediation as follows: "Il passaggio al modello (culturale e telematico) della Rete non conduce alla **dis-intermediazione**, ma porta piuttosto verso la **iper-mediazione** (...) perché aumentando i percorsi informativi, comunicativi e documentari possibili, aumentano in proporzione anche le possibilità di scelta e il bisogno di una molteplicità di punti di vista da cui affrontare i

problemi cognitivi e di criteri con cui ordinare il docuverso", p.10.

<sup>24</sup> Barbara J. Ford has been President of the ALA, American Library Association; today she is a member of the Chicago Public Library Commission. The quoted sentence refers to a conference about Public Libraries held in Barcelona in 2002.

<sup>25</sup> We want to transcribe the full abstract of Fernandez Molina's (2000) article because of its many interesting suggestions: "Information professional carry out their tasks in specific social and political contexts. Their activity is shaped by a range of norms, including ethical and legal ones. In our days, active and future information professionals should be inculcated two basic ideas: the first one is that information should not be regarded exclusively as a market good (rather than understanding it in purely economic terms, they should strive to defend the interest of citizens *openly* and *free*). Secondly, they must never forget their mission of enabling the access to any type of information, without imposing any control or censorship related to beliefs, political, social or religious ideas".

<sup>26</sup> Mckee (2002) explains very clearly the concept: "Our principles, our values, our ethics also do not change (...). We stand as a profession for equality, inclusivity, mutuality and also for freedom and individuality".

<sup>27</sup> Also McCallum (2002) talks about the need to add value to our profession; in an environment deeply transformed by technologies, we have the duty to continue to add value to our daily activities, as always we have done, providing people with the information resources they want or need.

<sup>28</sup> Barajas and Sánchez (2005) write: "La función del bibliotecario será siempre la misma, cambian las formas, surgen nuevas herramientas, (...). La misión principal es la satisfacción del usuario en sus necesidades de información".

<sup>29</sup> "Vocation and willingness" are traductions of the Italian words "vocazione e volontà", describing by Salarelli (2000) as fundamental tools to face the new environment. In author's opinion, information and identity are inextricably connected ideas for librarians today:

"(...) spirito che deve essere *guerrier* per poter svolgere il proprio lavoro al servizio di comunità troppo spesso avaro di mezzi e ingrato di riconoscimenti. Vocazione e volontà: sono atteggiamenti fondanti di una professione che nei secoli mai come oggi rappresenta un baluardo contro il definitivo imbarbarimento dello spirito (...). Informazione e identità sono termini correlati, il secondo non può svilupparsi senza il primo, e se l'informazione è massiccia e confusa anche la nostra percezione del mondo che ci circonda non potrà che essere tale", p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Gómez and Montaña (1998) stress the idea of a librarian who must learn to face the reality with lively curiosity and constant interest: "(...) creación de un personal capaz de crear (...); capaz de un aprendizaje constante (...), y lo más importante, capaz de innovar. (...) Este profesional debe tener inquietudes por aprender, estar al día, conocer lo último en su ámbito profesional y leer mucho pero de forma selectiva. Debe ser una persona con imaginación y visión del futuro, y dispuesta a hacer realidad esa visión".

<sup>31</sup> Tamaro (1997) explains that for cataloguers librarians it's time to learn how they can catalogue electronic sources: metacataloguing means to use meta-information which is into the document in order to construct privileged access ways (by type of users, by discipline, by type of document...).

<sup>32</sup> Ridi (1997) defines the reference service as follows: "l'insieme di tutte le operazioni che tendono a facilitare l'incontro tra un bisogno informativo anche inespresso o inconscio e la risorsa informativa che può soddisfarlo", p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Ferruccio Diozzi (1993) writes: "S'impone il concetto dell'integrazione delle fonti informative, sia per quel che riguarda la loro collocazione, fonti interne all'organizzazione in cui si opera o fonti remote, sia per quel che riguarda la tipologia dell'informazione", p. 58.

- <sup>34</sup> The Doyle's (1992) full text, we refer to, is the following:  
"Information Literate recognises the need for information; recognises that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision making; identifies potential sources of information; develops successful search strategies; accesses sources of information, including computer-based and other technologies; evaluates information; organises information for practical application; integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge; uses information in critical thinking and problem solving".
- <sup>35</sup> According to ALA US Higher Education Standards (2000), "the information literate student:
- determines the nature and extent of the needed information;
  - accesses needed information effectively and efficiently;
  - evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his/her knowledge base and value system;
  - individually or as a member of a group uses information to accomplish a specific purpose;
  - understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally".
- <sup>36</sup> According to SCONUL Information Skills in higher education (1999), the seven pillars of Information Literacy are the abilities:
- to recognize a need for information;
  - to distinguish ways in which the information gap may be addressed;
  - to construct strategies for locating information;
  - to locate and access information;
  - to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources;
  - to organise, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate to the situations;
  - to synthesise and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge.

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