

Chapter 3

Evaluation of Digital Collections and Political Visibility of the Library

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to track the progress of the work of assessment of the digital collection at the library, as regards the periodical analysis on the effective ways of consulting different types of digital documents (text, sound or visual). It is important to understand the fundamental parameters prepared by the digital library, because as a result of nearly open access it is based on a resource that is for the most part not controlled and is monetarily undervalued. The digital library puts in place an evaluation structure that is specific. The knowledge of what the data collection system in use is, especially the recording, computer processing and statistical analysis, merit further study and the interest of a detailed work. The chapter is within the context of the researches advocating the use of statistics for the establishment of a digital collection plan. This chapter aims to serve the widest audience possible, and it will focus its initial efforts on the political visibility of libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Regarding the implementation of new measures concerning the digitizing of the collections in the library, from the point of view of its use and to help both the librarians and the users, there is a need to assess its cultural background and context. This culture could emerge from the evaluation of the use of the collections. Indeed

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digitalization creates a large spectrum of different possibilities for assessing the selection of documents, to check an editorial production, constantly updated and particularly diverse in its new technological information. A methodology is yet to be invented to be applied on a joint analysis of the digital and paper documents. If the consultation of digital documents is easier to quantify, it is nonetheless delicate to analyze; the established usages of the digital support depart partially from those of the print support. So it is legitimate to give it a place in determining the evolution of the range of media available from the Library. Particular attention is paid to the changes, over time, of the digital supply, quantitatively (to ensure balanced budgets and volumetrics between the domains) and qualitatively (updating, languages, document category, documentary frontiers between domains, library criteria for expurgation, etc.). And the tools used are such as the thematic ongoing monitoring of the annual acquisitions, or the tracking chart of the digital collections and the collective readiness of the digital selection criteria. Therefore, a hybrid approach to the data from the print and digital collections occurs in various forms and it can be applied at several levels (areas/disciplines, and even shelf marks when the amount of items to be compared has proven to be representative). Within this conjoint perspective, the objectivity of public reading would place the libraries back at the heart of a process bringing their image into a more political domain, for regaining territories into a more offensive way inside the semantic web.

The purpose of this chapter is to track the progress of this work of assessment of the digital collection at the library, as regards the periodical analysis on the effective ways of consulting different types of digital documents (text, sound or visual). It is important to understand the fundamental parameters prepared by the digital library, because as a result of nearly open access it is based on a resource that is for the most part not controlled and is monetarily undervalued. The digital library puts in place an evaluation structure that is specific. The knowledge of what the data collection system in use is, especially the recording, computer processing and statistical analysis, merit further study and the interest of a detailed work. The chapter is within the context of the researches advocating the use of statistics for the establishment of a digital collection plan. This chapter aims to serve the widest audience possible, and it will focus its initial efforts on the political visibility of libraries.

Background

Documentation policies involve a desire to untangle the special features which have contributed to the digitalization and to select adequate tools tailored to the needs of the readers. A rigorous evaluation of the digital documentary resources and a

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