

## «Digital Libraries à la carte 2007»: suggestions and trends from the 11th Ticer Summer School

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From August 27<sup>th</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> the University of Tilburg, Netherlands, organized and welcomed the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ticer Summer School, that gathered about one hundred librarians from many countries worldwide, debating on «Digital Libraries à la carte 2007» (details available at <http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/services/lis/ticer/07carte/index.html>). Scientific Director was Norbert Lossau, recently appointed Director of the Göttingen State and University Library, Germany, and scientific coordinator of the European Project DRIVER (Digital Repository Infrastructure Vision for European Research, <http://www.driver-repository.eu/>).

The modular course, with the aim at preparing «librarians for the future », consisted in five modules, each articulated in four lectures:

- Module 1: Strategic Developments and Library Management
- Module 2: Technological Developments: Threats and Opportunities for Libraries
- Module 3: Hands-on: Open Source Software for Libraries and XML
- Module 4a: Libraries Supporting Research and Open Access
- Module 4b: Hands-on: Library 2.0 Technologies to Reach out to the Customer
- Module 5: Libraries Supporting Teaching and Learning

Modules 4a and 4b were parallel. I attended the Open Access module.

Each lecture ended with a 30 minutes questions-answer session, that created a really interactive environment, assured also by the presence of all the lecturers of the day – and some of them attended the whole course long, giving a precious contribute to the debate. The lecturers' high level, the importance and the up-to-dateness of the themes and the interest aroused about them, the experiences discussed by the participants created an atmosphere of involving sense of network and sharing.

There are some few keywords that can give an outline of the several subjects the course was dealing with: listening, collaboration, integration, innovation, testing, presence at the point of use, access-availability, reuse, seamlessness, rethinking, shifting...

I think you can summarize these trends with the words of one of the second-day lecturer, Robin Murray (Vice-President, OCLC): «Synthesise, specialise, mobilise», as sounds the title of his article published on Ariadne (48, July 2006, available at <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue48/murray/>). In his *Strategic introduction to the state-of-technology*, Murray gave a picture of the current technical and business framework the libraries are working in, painting it like a city map in which either the libraries will place themselves in the middle downtown, near to the users' needs, or they will disappear. Other information gateways will take their place, if they can't manage to deliver web-based innovative services at the point of use: his "grid-enabled business strategy" model raised a profitable critical debate.

Some other lectures tried to show practicable pathways in «**synthesising**» new services, like Pauline Simpson (University of Southampton, UK) and her *Supporting e-science: Combining cultures, connecting technology and connecting people*, centred on the open data, mash-up technologies, re-use, and the central role of the libraries in this process, with the re-purpose of an interesting SWOT analysis lead by Liz Lyon (UKOLN); or Peter Doorn's (DANS, Data Archiving and Networked services, NL) *Between dream and deed: Open Access to research data for the humanities and social sciences*, built around the concepts of “availability”, “complementarity”, “curation”, “access”, to make true the dream of large scale research facilities, as debated in the International Data Forum in Beijing, in 2007 (see <http://www.internationaldataforum.org/>). Joan Lippincott's (CNI – Coalition of Networked Information) *Are we ready to rethink libraries for the Net gen students?* was an enthralling portrait of the Net gen students and the contents, tools, services and environments that could be used to re-orient libraries in order to be more responsive to these new – real and virtual – users. It was really an injection of enthusiasm with a lot of precious suggestions characterized by another keyword: «**try out**», both in rethinking services, in rearranging spaces, in reengineering staff and styles of service. For instance, Anne Bell (Univ. of Warwick, UK) gave many case studies to show off her *Ptolemy or Copernicus? Implications for Learning space design and its impact on the changing role of the library*, connecting the new learning trends and the new use of the space – social, collaborative, accessible, blending the physical and the virtual. Fascinating was also Igor Mayer (Univ. of Delft, NL) and its experimental, innovative *Playful learning through games and virtual worlds*, that opened new ways for the virtual library and its approach to the users.

In «**specialising**», Stephen Town's (Cranfield University, UK) *Performance measurement and accountability*, taught us the importance of being always listening not only to the users' needs but also to their perceptions – Libqual™ *docet* – and discussed the concepts of impact (effect or outcome?), value, added value, cost-effectiveness. He showed also the new VAMP (Value and Impact Measurement Programme, available at <http://vamp.diglib.shrivenham.cranfield.ac.uk/performance>) project by SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries, UK), that will include a web site like a “community of practice” in the measurement field. To better focus on users perception and to specialise the portfolio of services was designed Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe's (Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) *Social Networking and immersive worlds: Academic libraries connecting with community*; as well as Anne Christensen (State and University Library, Hamburg, D) showed us her creature “Stella”, a chatbot built with an avatar and a rich knowledge base, that interacts with the library users to help them with quick reference (and got also more than 592 marriage proposals...). Benchmarking with other electronic reference services in the same library, it results that Stella ranks first with an average of 251 usages per day, while the traditional e-mail scores only 5 accesses, FAQs score 160, online tutorials 25. A challenge for the future, it seems.

About «**mobilizing**» we heard John Wilbanks (Science Commons) talking about the library as a hub node in the knowledge network, and the Science Commons' vision to combine publishing, data, and licensing approaches to develop solutions for a truly integrated and streamlined research process. He illustrated the new Science Commons' projects: SCAE (Scholar's Copyright Addendum Engine, available at <http://scholars.sciencecommons.org/>), a tool to ensure the author's right to reuse in signing publishers' agreement; the Biological

Materials Transfer Agreement Project (MTA, available at <http://sciencecommons.org/projects/licensing/>), that develops and deploys standard, modular contracts to lower the costs of transferring physical biological materials such as DNA, cell lines, model animals, antibodies; the Neurocommons project (available at <http://sciencecommons.org/projects/data/>), whose aim is at creating an Open Source knowledge management platform for biological research, applying text mining and natural language processing to open biomedical abstracts, and, later, the development of a data analysis software system.

As John Mac Coll (University of Edinburgh, UK) made a survey on *Doing more with Open Access repositories: recent developing services*, focusing on Herbert Van de Sompel's idea of an "overlay journal" (see D-Lib Magazine, 12 (10) October 2006, available at <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/october06/vandesompe/10vandesompe.html>), Patricia Iannuzzi (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) delighted us with her *Changing learning, changing roles: collaboration in support of course redesign*. Starting from the new users' keyword (community, immersive, control, customization, problem solving, visualization-effects), Patricia suggested a new model in shifting library culture in which old and new services – discover, access, create, instruct, consult, integrate – create the connection between users and collections. She also shared her experience in redesigning courses by strengthening the collaboration among campus partners, putting the "course" at the centre, and making all the stakeholders interacting in a team in order to connect research, teaching, information literacy, and library collections. During the whole process, the library and the librarians played the proactive role of "changing agents", mobilizing their resources and expertise to the development of a net gen research environment. This sounds like a roadmap for the years to come.