Remodelling a Library – Remodelling Mentalities

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Abstract
The paper presents the modernization process of the Library of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, a branch institution of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. Having a rather deplorable situation (lack of funds, proper organization, library room etc.) for a starting point, the clever measures applied transformed this library into a modern and effective informative centre offering an agreeable environment for reading, well organized book collections, good electronic equipment and a well functioning safety system. Such a modernization process always requires results in changing people's mentalities in some measure and it may be an example for further initiatives.

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This paper presents and analyzes the process in the course of which the Library of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj has been remodelled. This library is one of the Branch Libraries of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. Consequently, the remodelling process demanded from the beginning that both institutions – having distinct profiles, orientations and even different institutional culture – should participate and work together. However, they were "closely related" as regards the lack of financial resources.

Because of this, the library modernization project also required the involvement of some factors that could provide for these resources. Thus the idea occurred to try to obtain the financial assistance of the local government which might provide for a part of the funds necessary to our project.

The fact that this process lasted for approximately four years convinced me that in our social-historical conditions such an initiative

represents more than the realization of some ameliorative municipal and technical modernization processes, but also an effort – in all the directions of all the institutions and persons involved in it – to remodel mentalities. In other words: an effort of pioneering and "setting" an example.

Initial state

The Library of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports is a "branch" of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library in Cluj. It was established with the resources available in different moments without applying a well thought-out conception in accord with the specific methods of librarianship. In addition, the library space was unsuitable: a very small room that could be entered from a lecture room. Readers therefore also were not served well.

As the institution had mainly served passively as a depository, on the one hand it was necessary to organize the publication collections according to modern librarianship principles – in order that the collection may develop permanently. On the other hand there was a need to make the library institution into a really attractive and stimulating space as regards the educational and socio-communal environment. These were the conditions when I took over this branch library eight years ago being determined to carry out its modernization.

The modernization project of the library

1. The first step, the first quite difficult task was to make the faculty directors realize the need to create a really modern library and to convince them to include this project in their investment priorities.

2. The next step was to find and obtain a space as adequate as possible and to project and realize/furnish an attractive environment from the point of view of the colour effect and functionality. Finding the necessary approval from the faculty leadership I obtained the necessary space. I furnished it completely: painting, parqueting, installing the adequate light and heat sources as well as supplying it with special furniture.

From the beginning the project was structured upon some principles that I wanted to apply. All the elements and phases of the operations were subordinated to these: open access, databases of our own that could be accessed freely by the readers, Internet-connection – on the one hand for using the online catalogues and the databases of the Central University

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Library, on the other hand for free documentary search – and, finally, creation of an effective protective system.

- **Open access**

The entire book collection is placed on open access shelves. It is organized according to disciplines and within the disciplines chronologically. With this purpose all the books were given new shelfmarks. We used labels of different colours in order that the reader could orientate more easily when selecting the material for study.

- **Computer databases**

Meanwhile each book was registered into a database created with the help of the ProCite software. In this way searches can be made by any registration field. For indexing the **thesaurus of descriptors** was constituted – in collaboration with the Library of Physical Education and Sports Academy, Bucharest – which was registered in a card index of authorities and used in order to search for the information according to its content.

- **Internet connection and access to the databases of the Central University Library**

Another preoccupation in developing and modernizing the Library of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports was to offer to our readers access to Internet and at the same time to the Aleph database of the Central University Library. With this purpose in mind we obtained a connection to the server of the faculty and before long the connections that enabled the students to consult the OPAC of the Central University Library database were established.

- **The safety system**

Open access to the shelves implies the risk of theft. Direct supervision of the reading room being almost impossible because of other activities, I considered it necessary to start obtaining funds for the acquisition of an **effective antitheft system**. The library having no funds for its acquisition, I prepared a paper justifying the need to the Local Council of Cluj-Napoca, in which I invited the Council to participate with funds – along with the Central University Library and the "Babeş-Bolyai" University – in supplying our library with a modern protection system.

The protection system of the collection

The collection's protection system consists of the ACS Antitheft System and the video supervision system. The **ACS Antitheft System** (antenna control system) was described to us at that time (2001) as one of the few existing systems which have *tags* (adhesive bands containing a

metallic fibre magnetized or which can be magnetized) that can be attached to the back of the book. The system is constituted by: the system of antennas with controller (which must be placed at 5 m distance from any electronic or metallic mechanism), the activating/deactivating machine (which can inclusively be a barcode reader) and the sensor fibres (that is the *tags*). In this way the **ACS systems** minimize the risk of book theft.

According to the brochure presenting the product a study made in the USA and Canada calculated that the acquisition costs of the ACS are recovered in approximately 18 months. But, besides effectively detecting the willingly or accidentally stolen books, the antennas, looking like gates – by their simple presence – discourage anyway the intention to steal the publications.

The antennas must naturally cover the entire width of the exits. In order to achieve this there is the possibility to use two or three antennas connected to the same controller. If there is more than one exit, the controllers can be synchronized.

Because of this one should plan where to place the antennas at the same time when projecting the library space taking into consideration the fact that radio waves are sensitive to electromagnetic dust. This latter is easily diffused on big or moving metallic surfaces.

It is also extremely important that the antennas should be far from CRT monitors, light sources, metallic pipes (water, gas) and that electric power should be supplied by adequately grounded connectors.

The system is equipped with the most modern technology, named DSP (Digital Signal Processing). This is actually a digital filter for sorting the necessary signals from the electromagnetic dust. (The system does not affect pacemakers.)

When a theft is detected the antennas can block the doors and command the video camera positioned before them to start recording.

The activator/deactivator is a machine that has the function to activate the tags attached on the publication when this is brought into the library and to deactivate the tags when the publication is carried out from the library space with the librarian's consent.

Tags are of different length. There are tags DSA and SSA (one or both sides having special adhesive). And there also are special tags for CDs, DVDs, audio or video cassettes.

The video supervision system

In order that an antitheft system may effectively protect the collections of a library it must be aided by a video supervision system. The basic functions of this system are: watching the library space, recording and storing images of it, searching and playing back recorded images. In this way the human resources at the library's disposal can be used optimally.

The cameras are of 0 lux. This means that they can work and see perfectly in the dark. They can be programmed to start functioning automatically when the image changes or to function between certain hours. If it is necessary, the acquisition plate disposes of entrances for each camera separately. The entrances are separately commanded by PIR movement detectors.

Each camera channel can be configured separately or all the channels can be configured at the same time. The interface is constructed so that it can use approximately 90% of the camera moving controllers that exist on the market.

Minimal requirements for the plate recording video images – selected from the producer's user guide – are:

H/W	Requirements
CPU	Celeron – 2G
Memory	256MB over
Main Board	Intel Chip Set compatible
Hard Disk Drive	40G

Video Card Resolution: 1024X768 Colour: True Colour (32bit) over Memory 32MB

I mention that these are the minimal requirements.

Here are some specifications of the video supervision system:

• If a burglary or theft is detected, the images will be saved in minimal resolution and with a minimal number of frames/second in order to have enough space on the minimal hard. Because it is placed into a security system, the processor – when used in real time – will keep busy all resources until the valuable information is saved.

• In order to decongest the system a CD writer is necessary, the hard disk working connected with the CD unit. It is also indicated to take into consideration the fact that the distribution of resources by using separate central units for the different applications makes necessary to use a separate computer for this application. In this way even if the system

fails, the other systems will remain functional. Windows XP 2000 is a suitable operation system for this. The programs used for visualization must be newer than 2000.

Conclusions

From all these experiences conclusions of different kinds can be drawn. The most obvious conclusion seems to be an anthropological one: despite the immobility and the different difficulties that may occur related to material issues, organizations, institutions and mentalities, concentrated and permanent efforts have real chances to succeed. Therefore one can modify, improve and remodel institutions as well as mentalities.

This conclusion is strengthened especially by the fact that such a remodelling process was successful in the case of the Library of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, a faculty that may not usually be known for its members' intense and varied reading activity...

This is why I think that the most important result of the modernization of this library may be that the students' and teachers' behaviour and habits regarding the use of the library radically changed. Thus the library became more than an informational "service point" used more and more frequently in these days. It became a space of meeting, of human and professional contact and communication for its readers.

This, however, naturally means that the image of our branch library has been positively and radically modified as well. This new image may become popular in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library and even outside this institution.

The propagation of such an image may positively affect the so called organizational culture. The modification of this culture is all the more important as these library institutions are organizations subsidized mainly from the state budget. And this aspect favours immobility and "waiting" for the allocation...

But examples and experiences – as the one presented and analyzed in this article – demonstrate at the same time the necessity and the possibility of autonomous and profitable initiatives.

Consequently, although the specific function of libraries – to answer the readers' information needs – remains the same, the means and services must be adapted to the new technologies, as well as to the new mentalities and the new requirements of the organizational culture. This improves the library image, renders the institution's functioning more efficient and increases its social and human prestige.