

## **Bibliographic Information or Tracking the Book in the Library**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of the bibliographic information service in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. The library having several collections and catalogues, users may often need some help in their search for information. It is the task of the bibliographer on duty to assist them.

Assisting readers is not a simple task. The librarian, besides being familiar with the library, must have a good knowledge of human psychology for he has to help the different types of library users according to their needs. He must decide in each case whether he should help the user to find certain information or to show him how to search for it independently. Though it is better for both the user and the librarian if the former learns to use efficiently the informative tools of the library, the librarian is ready to answer satisfactorily even the most banal questions.

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It is a well-known fact that the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library is one of the biggest libraries in the country. Developed over several decades, the material of the library is organized in many collections. One can find several pressmark types in the traditional and/or online catalogues, these being placed in the Catalogue Room but in other locations of the library as well. Because of this, certain categories of users have only limited access to them. In addition to these, there are different types of access to the publications: served from the stacks (in certain rooms, depending on the collection to which the book asked for belongs) or, in certain cases, directly from the shelf. The complex collections and search methods make difficult finding the required information even for the librarians sometimes.

In order to solve such problems, a *Bibliographic Information* desk functions in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. Here

two librarians, the *bibliographers on duty*, assist the users in finding the needed information, more precisely in using the informative instruments of the library. They also have another task: to teach the readers how to use the library services more or less independently. It has not always been sufficiently understood how complex some aspects of this service may be; a service in which the librarian represents maybe the most important link, intermediary between the reader and information.

Evidently, in order to inform the users properly, the librarian must be familiar with all the library resources. Being a *bibliographer on duty*, I can say that the maximum efficiency of this service is assured only if the librarian, besides being familiar with the library and having all the qualities necessary to maintain relations with the public, has a wide general culture and last but not least he has a good knowledge of human psychology. Why am I saying this?

We can answer correctly, completely and clearly the majority of enquiries and we can express (verbally and non-verbally) that we are ready to answer these queries, but the user must decide whether he takes advantage of this service or not. In many cases, users do not know how complex the available information sources are, therefore they think that they need no help. In other cases they do not know at all that they can ask for help. Some users hesitate to ask the librarian's assistance for different reasons, others, fortunately few people, are unwilling to accept this. On the other hand, having decided to ask for help, sometimes the user does not know to ask exactly for the information he needs, and, in order to understand the query accurately, we need to ask additional questions, which may give us further clues.

It is more important to instruct readers who are able to use the informative instruments of the library than assisting them in their search each time. In the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library we instruct the users – if they are disposed to cooperate – in courses organized with this special purpose or simply during everyday work. Naturally, the librarian must decide whether in the case of an enquiry he presents to the reader *what* he finds in the library collections or *how* the reader himself should look for the information he is interested in; whether he directs the reader to the required information or he explains how the user himself can search for it. In my case, when time does not interfere in my decision, I take into consideration the degree of interest shown for the library by the respective user and his disposition to learn.

During the years spent in this service I observed that the users of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, mainly students, use the

library services in order to complete their knowledge required in their studies. Thus, in most of the cases, they are interested in the library as far as their professors request them to use the library in the studying process. This is why many of these students are not interested in the library services themselves. More precisely, they do not realize how important and useful is for them to be familiar with the library services. Many of them come to the library from time to time in order to prepare a presentation or to obtain the compulsory reading material. Their aim is to get the publication asked for into the reading room (after, in most of the cases, having tried to borrow it) as soon as possible and eventually to photocopy the necessary pages. Unfortunately, even in the case of those who spend a lot of time in the reading rooms being interested in reading does not necessarily imply an interest in the library. Although this lack of interest may be justified, it is not agreeable at all from the point of view of the librarian who has to explain elementary issues to a user he has been seeing in the library for 2-3 years, almost every day. These are the users who receive exact, precise answers in the shortest possible time when they ask for help. In their case, I think we cannot speak of formation.

Fortunately, there are also "others", users who, spending much time in the library, find it normal to understand what is going on around them, to become acquainted with the library and its services. As they are evidently more inclined to learn, in their case, when helping them to find the necessary information, the emphasis is on explaining the way in which this can be done. The formation of users in the case of this category is equally necessary for the reader and the librarian. The reader has the advantage of a greater independence when using the library services, while the librarian's work is radically facilitated.

As a personal conclusion I can say that the activity of giving bibliographic information is first of all a provocation for me. Even if not every enquiry makes me feel like a detective tracking the book in the library, in each case I have at least the gratification to answer satisfactorily even the most banal questions.