Changing the role of the librarian – from a cataloguer to an educator

ABSTRACT: Libraries in the modern world are becoming places for collecting and exchanging information based on advanced information and communication technologies and tools. Accordingly, the role of the traditional librarian has changed significantly, from a cataloger of analog documents, through a librarian who deals with metadata, to lecturer and educator. This paper presents the way librarians transfer the knowledge to their colleagues and thus transform from librarians-catalogers into educators. The role of librarian educator is given through the example of accredited professional development programs for librarians, organized and held by librarians-catalogers from the University Library "Svetozar Marković" in Belgrade. The paper also analyzes anonymous surveys of participants in accredited seminars, which indicate that the success of one seminar depends primarily on two factors: up-to-date topic and interactivity.
KEYWORDS: librarian-cataloger, educator, accredited seminars, academic librarians, University Library "Svetozar Marković", professional development.

Nataša Dakić
dakic@unilib.rs

Aleksandra Trtovac
aleksandra@unilib.rs

Jelena Andonovski
andonovski@unilib.rs

University Library
"Svetozar Marković"
Belgrade, Serbia

1 Introduction

The impression of the librarian and his character, in the local or academic community, throughout history has been subject to the stereotypical images that the librarian is a silent, strict but kind, conservatively dressed person

whose only job is organizing books on shelves and whose work is not attractive, dynamic or interesting. Individual and team engagement of librarians in daily work as well as working within professional associations and organizations, contributes to the strengthening the role of librarians and suppression of stereotypes in the public (Јаћимовић и Петровић, 2014, 65).

Based on this thesis, we observe a change of the traditional role of librarians.Mainly thanks to public appearances, independent education in terms of new technologies and skills, publishing professional and scientific papers and transferring their knowledge at seminars, lectures and conferences, librarians are upgrading their primary role and become educators of their fellow librarians and interested individuals – students, experts, museologists, archivists and researchers close to the field of librarianship and informatics.

The concept of a librarian who has more responsibilities as well as the fact that librarian has no longer only one, clearly conceived scope is in line with the above (Shank et al., 2011, 108). The traditional functions of the academic library and the role of the academic librarian have been redesigned (e.g. monographs cataloging includes electronic editions cataloging), some functions have been discontinued (e.g. printing, maintenance and often the use of the card catalogue has been stopped), and some functions have been combined in new ways (e. g. card catalogs and certain parts of library collections have been digitized and therefore available on the web).

Libraries today, as places for information aggregation, publishing publications, lecturing, places where research and development projects are carried out are becoming the main advocates of information accessibility policy (Neal, 2010). In modern times, in addition to the knowledge acquired during university studies and professional librarian exam, the librarian must constantly improve and upgrade knowledge, which means possession of skills in new communication technologies, use of web 2.0 tools and expansion of library resources (Shank et al., 2011, 109).

The main job of the librarian-cataloger, which referred to the cataloging and classification of monographic and serial publications, non-book and other analog materials, moved primarily to cataloging electronic sources, and then to creating repositories and digital libraries and assigning metadata to digital objects stored in them. Assigning metadata to digital objects is basically close to cataloging analog documents. "Well-trained catalogers of analog objects very quickly become proficient in the technique of assigning metadata to digital objects" (Тртовац, 2016, 43). However, regardless of this fact, most librarians need support when working with metadata, so the workshops and lectures related to this topic are organized.

However, based on their abilities, librarians-catalogers, especially in academic libraries, transform their activities in the direction of taking care of data, their organization and visibility. Accordingly, the thesis is that one of the roles of librarians is to deal with the life cycle of information sources (Rice and Southall, 2016, 1). Catalogers need to be aware that information mediums and sources are changing and accordingly their traditional job needs to be transformed. Changing the job and scope of the cataloger implies constant training, improvement and education because academic librarians who deal with data (data librarian) are expected more than before to be supportive in research processes during various phases of research (Rice and Southall, 2016, 87).

Through all these activities, self-education and training, the librarian builds a professional identity and puts himself in a position to cross the determinated framework which is traditionally given to him and become primarily an educator of his fellow librarians, but also others who have interest in new technologies and development of library and information profession. It was pointed out in (McGuinness, 2011) that librarians who deal with teaching should pay attention to how important their role is and what it implies. It is based on issues of trust and motivation of the audience, successful communication with new persons, building of professional identity and identifying the need for education and learning. These postulates apply to lecturers from all fields, but they are also a starting point from where librarians should build their role as lecturers and knowledge transmitters (Reale, 2018, 9).

In 2013, the library community in our country recognized the need for mandatory continuous professional training of employees in library and information sciences, so the largest libraries and professional associations got involved in selection and organisation of accredited seminars – National Library of Serbia,[1] Matica Srpska Library,[2] University Library „Svetozar Marković",[3] Serbian Library Association,[4] Parent Library Community of Serbia[5] and Serbian Academic Library Association.[6][7]

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[1] National Library of Serbia

[2] Matica Srpska Library

[3] University Library „Svetozar Marković"

[4] Serbian Library Association

[5] Parent Library Community of Serbia

[6] Serbian Academic Library Association

[7] Details of this program in the section Accredited seminars for continuing professional development

The case study in this paper is based on the experience of the librarians-catalogers from the Library Materials Cataloguing Department of the University Library "Svetozar Marković" in Belgrade, who have come a long way from traditional librarians to educators. The experience is based on dozens of lectures, courses, accredited seminars and workshops for which librarians-cataloguers had to transform their traditional work and improve their knowledge, interests and skills in terms of modern Information and communications technology, as well as the ability to transfer knowledge to related audience.

2 Historical overview

By the Statute of the University of Belgrade in 1974, the University Library became the co-ordinating library for all libraries of the University of Belgrade (Petrović i Bulatović, 2019, 96), and with the adoption of the *Serbian Library Act – Закон о библиотечкој делатности Србије* (Република Србија, 1977) it extended the functions of the co-ordinating library to all academic libraries in Central Serbia. One of the basic functions of the co-ordinating library is to take care of staff training. *Work reports of the University Library – Извештаји о раду Универзитетске библиотеке* during the seventies of the 20th century clearly show Library's commitment for continuing professional development of employees and also the aspiration to educate librarians from its surroundings, primarily librarians employed at the University of Belgrade. During the year 1977, five professional lectures were organized and one seminar on publication accessioning was prepared in order to improve library services (Универзитетска библиотека „Светозар Марковић", 1978).

Also, the *Belgrade Academic Library Association (Zajednica biblioteka Univerziteta u Beogradu)* was founded in 1976 in order to improve the coordination of all libraries at the University, and was soon joined by other academic libraries in Serbia. In 1992, this organization grew into the *Serbian Academic Library Association (Zajednica biblioteka univerziteta u Srbiji – ZBUS)*, with its headquarters in the University Library "Svetozar Marković", within which the permanent education of librarians is marked as one of the basic goals.

Over the years, the Library, in accordance with its legal obligations, has undertaken the obligation to organize and conduct various forms of professional development of librarians employed in all academic institutions. Today, according to the *Decision – Решење* based on the *Serbian Library Act –*

Закон о библиотечко-информационој делатности, the University Library "Svetozar Marković" in Belgrade performs parent functions for all university libraries, academic libraries and libraries of scientific research institutes and institutions on the territory of central Serbia (Република Србија, 2012). Back in 2003, the Library, within its *Statute – Статут*, in Article 10, prescribed the obligation to organize continuous professional development for its library staff (Универзитетска библиотека „Светозар Марковић", 2003).

In the past two decades, the Library has organized various trainings for employees in academic and special libraries (in the form of lectures, workshops, seminars, etc.), covering all important segments of work in the library, from cataloguing rules, new formats for processing library materials to usage of different electronic services.

Establishing unique national bibliographic-information system CO-BISS.SR[8] in 2003 represents a turning point in the development of Serbian librarianship which at the same time caused many changes in the segment of education of professional library staff in Serbia. Namely, to work within the COBISS software package, which is in the base of this system, it is necessary to have a license that is issued in accordance with the *Rules for issuing the permisssion for shared cataloguing – Правилник о издавању лиценце за узајамну каталогизацију* (Република Србија, 2009). In short, this working license implies attending a five-day course and creating 30 bibliographic records and related authority records. At the beginning, during 2003 and 2004, in order to help faculty libraries, which were joining the shared cataloguing system, University library "Svetozar Marković", as their main coordinating library, organized series of courses and workshops, offering expert consultations when moving to a new way of working since a high degree of irregularities in the cataloguing of publications was observed, which arose mainly as a result of the differences between the card catalogue and electronic catalogue, as well as insufficient knowledge of cataloguing rules. The mentioned training was led by librarians from the Library Materials Cataloguing Department of the University Library, and librarians who attended these courses were very satisfied with the opportunity to eliminate doubts through direct communication and improve their task performance in the system.

As one of the founders of the unique bibliographic-information system of the Republic of Serbia, the Library, in addition to education, is also involved in licensing for work in shared cataloguing system COBISS.SR. The members of the *Commission for issuing licenses for shared cataloguing sys-*

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[8] COBISS.SR

tem – Комисија за лиценце за узајамну каталогизацију are representatives elected from employees in the National Library of Serbia, the Matica Srpska Library and the University Library "Svetozar Marković". Also, licensed lecturers on given courses for work in the COBISS.SR shared cataloguing system come from these three main institutions. Librarians from the Library Materials Cataloguing Department of the University Library have been engaged both as lecturers and members of the Commission.

At the same time, striving to be at the service to librarians in its network, the Library continuously monitors new technologies and holds workshops and lectures on available electronic resources: on the KoBSON portal, on non-commercial and commercial sources of information, citation managers, etc. which is all led by librarians from the Scientific Information and Education Department. With its overall engagement in the field of lifelong learning, the Library has unequivocally become a leader in the field of education of library staff in Serbia.

3   Professional Development Programs

However, until the enactment of the Serbian Library Act – *Закон о библиотечко-информационој делатности* (Република Србија, 2011) and the Rules on Continuing Professional Development in Library and Information Science – *Правилник о сталном стручном усавршавању у библиотечко-информационој делатности* (Република Србија, 2013), there was no obligation for employees in library and information science to upgrade their professional tasks performances.

For the first time, mentioned *Rules* within the library-information science, define, in addition to the methods of accreditation of the professional training program, the obligation of continuous professional training of employees on an annual level in duration of no less than six working hours.

The accreditation of the program is conducted by the National Library of Serbia on the proposition of *Commission for Accreditation of Continuing Professional Development Programs (Комисија за акредитацију програма сталног стручног усавршавања)* formed by the CEO of the National Library of Serbia. The Commission consists of representatives from the National Library of Serbia, Matica Srpska Library, University Library "Svetozar Marković", Serbian Library Association, Parent Library Community of Serbia and Serbian Academic Library Association.

Programs are proposed through a competition announced by the National Library of Serbia every September, and all resources needed to run the pro-

gram are provided by the library in which the proposer of the program is employed.

It is important to point out that Article 6 of the mentioned rules also envisages the holding of remote seminars, which enables the realization of seminars during various emergency situations. However, this right was not exercised in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2020 the National Library of Serbia decided to extend the deadline for all seminars accredited for 2020 to the next year, so they are valid until the end of 2021. If the situation is unfavorable during 2021, each program will be hold remotely, if the program plan does not foresee practical work.

The first competition for accreditation of continuing professional development seminars was conducted in September 2013, when 31 programs were offered and 24 were selected. Over the years, the number of proposed programs has declined slightly, and the number of participants, according to available statistics, varies and moves in the range of two to three thousand (Бегенишић, 2018, 137).

4 University Library "Svetozar Marković" Contribution

In accordance with its obligations and goals, University Library "Svetozar Marković" immediately after the adoption of the Rules in 2013 joined the process of education of employees in library and information services and accredited the first in a series of education programs. By 2020, the Library had accredited a total of 30 programs. The number of accredited programs for the specified period, as well as the number of programs accredited by the Library is shown in Table 1, while the names of accredited programs are shown in Table 2.

Bearing in mind that employees in public libraries also apply as program participants, the University Library "Svetozar Marković" designs programs that are not too closely related to a specialized group of attendees, i.e. employees in the academic libraries network, but are also interesting to employees from public libraries (Поповић и др., 2019, 36). Education programs are created by librarians, experts in a particular field, at the initiative of the administration or on their own initiative, proposing topics from their field of work. Librarians from different sectors of the Library are often teamed up in creation of certain programs and some programs were implemented at the initiative of the University Library in cooperation with librarians from other

Program Accreditation Year	Total Number of Accredited Programs	Number of accredited programs in the University Library "Svetozar Marković"
2013/2014	24	1
2014/2015	26	4
2015/2016	16	5
2016/2017	18	5
2017/2018	14	5
2018/2019	14	5
2019/2020	10	5

Table 1. Information on accredited programs in the University Library "Svetozar Marković" for the period 2013-2020

libraries. In the period from 2013 to 2020, 3035 participants attended the accredited programs in the University Library. Overall, the most successful and most visited were: *Copyright in the Field of Library and Information Services*[9], *Wiki-Librarian*[10] and *Democratization of Digitization in Libraries*[11]. The number of participants per accredited seminar is shown in Table 2.

In addition, during 2018, experts from the Library Materials Cataloguing Department of the University Library "Svetozar Marković" were involved in the accredited program of the Institute of Information Sciences (IZUM)[12] under the name *Education for Library Cataloguing in COBISS.SR System (Образовање библиотекара на рад у систему COBISS.SR)* organized by the National Library of Serbia when as licensed lecturers held 14 separate courses entitled *Transition to COBISS3 / Cataloguing with normative control of authority headings (Прелазак на COBISS3/Каталогизацију са нормативном контролом)*. In that way, about 250 librarians employed in the academic libraries network of Serbia gained the required license for further work in the shared cataloging system COBISS.SR.

[9] The program is led by librarians from the Scientific Information and Education Department and Library Materials Cataloguing Department.

[10] The program is led by librarians from the Scientific Information and Education Department and Library Materials Cataloguing Department.

[11] The program is led by librarians from the Library Materials Cataloguing Department.

[12] Institute of Information Sciences (IZUM)

Nr.	Year of Accreditation Program	Name of Accredited Program	Number of Participants
1	2013/2014	Information Literacy in Libraries: commercial and non-commercial electronic information sources	221
2	2014/2015	Metadata in Contemporary Librarianship	71
3	2014/2015	Wiki-Librarian	77
4	2014/2015	Google for Librarians	213
5	2014/2015	Digital Marketing Culture	59
6	2015/2016	Linked Open Data and Bibframe: new forms of metadata organization in librarianship	249
7	2015/2016	Bibliometrics and Scientific Journals	179
8	2015/2016	Wiki-Librarian	81
9	2015/2016	Copyright in the Field of Library and Information Science	337
10	2015/2016	Digital Storytelling and Social Media	44
11	2016/2017	RDA and BIBFRAME: a bibliographic description for the 21st century	54
12	2016/2017	Wiki-Librarian	90
13	2016/2017	Bibliographic Tools: EndNote and Mendeley	35
14	2016/2017	Multimedia in Librarianship	46
15	2016/2017	Copyright in the Field of Library and Information Science : the notion of plagiarism and violation of rights	123
17	2017/2018	Wiki-Librarian	50
18	2017/2018	New Media in Libraries	15
19	2017/2018	Digital Repositories in the Field of Library and Information Science	130
20	2017/2018	RDA and BIBFRAME: a bibliographic description for the 21st century	41
21	2018/2019	Wiki-Librarian	60

22	2018/2019	Communication on the Internet: open science in the service of society	60
23	2018/2019	Copyright in the Field of Library and Information Science: authorship and internet	140
24	2018/2019	Democratization of Digitization in Libraries	388
25	2018/2019	Ресурси интернета за боље друштво: отворена наука: документи и извори	140
26	2019/2020	Wiki-Librarian	-
27	2019/2020	Democratization of Digitization in Libraries	-
28	2019/2020	Communication on the Internet: open science in the service of society	-
29	2019/2020	Copyright in the Field of Library and Information Science: authorship and internet	-
30	2019/2020	Searchable Digital Collections – building and search: theoretical and practical approach	-

Table 2. List of accredited programs organized by the University Library "Svetozar Marković" for the period 2013-2020

5 Library Materials Cataloguing Department Activity

Digitization of library material became one of basic tasks in libraries, and appearance of digital documents led to the digital libraries creation. Therefore, librarians trained to work in dynamic and complex digital environment are becoming an imperative of modern librarianship. Librarians from Library Materials Cataloguing Department found that accredited programs were a chance for the library and information staff to get introduced to new technologies, formats and standards for digital document processing.

Librarians from Library Great Materials Cataloguing Department realized first accredited course in 2014, *Metadata in Contemporary Librarianship*. The great interest in course motivated librarians from this Department to continue with accredited programs in the following years. So far, four programs were very successfully realized, out of which two had to be accredited twice because of the great interest:

- *Metadata in Contemporary Librarianship* (accredited in 2014, realized in 2015);
- *Linked Open Data and Bibframe: new forms of metadata organization in librarianship* (accredited in 2015, realized in 2016);

- *RDA and BIBFRAME: a bibliographic description for the 21st century* (accredited in 2016 and in 2017, realized in 2017 and in 2018);
- *Democratization of Digitization in Libraries* (accredited in 2018 and in 2019, realized in 2019).
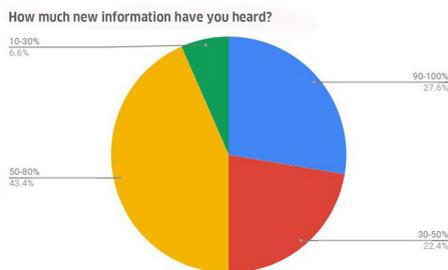

Figure 1. Content analysis of the course *Metadata in Contemporary Librarianship*.

Courses evaluation is done through electronic surveys. After the course is ended, all the participants get anonymous survey with carefully composed questions via email. All the participants need to fulfill the survey in a few days and send it back to the lecturers. So far, all surveys were prepared using Google Forms[13] which enables automatic preparation of tables with participant's answers, and is very useful for quick and easy sorting and data analyzing.

After very successful realization of course *Metadata in Contemporary Librarianship* during 2015, the survey answers of participants were very useful for preparation of the next course. On the question "How many new information have you heard" only 6.6% of participants said that they heard less than 30% (Figure 1); on the question "How do you evaluate the course" even 67.1% of participants said "Useful in every sense" (Figure 2); in the part "Your suggestions and comments" the most comments were like: "More seminars with this topic" or "Lecturers and information from this course justify my expectations".

The answers in the survey show that the name of the course *Linked Open Data and Bibframe: new forms of metadata organization in librarianship* was appropriate. 45.9% of participants answered that they were not familiar
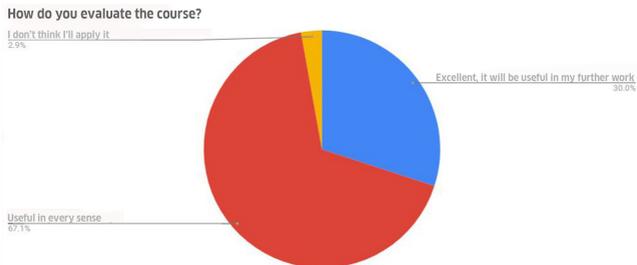
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[13] Google Forms

Figure 2. Evaluation of the course *Metadata in Contemporary Librarianship*.
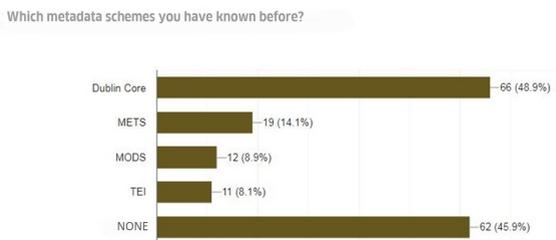

Figure 3. Content analysis of the course *Linked Open Data and Bibframe*.

with metadata schema introduced in the course (Figure 3), and only one participant answered that course was unnecessary (Figure 4). In the part "Your suggestions and comments" many comments were like: "Expect further cooperation! All the best in your work! Until the next meeting!", "Libraries do not have a future without digitization. More courses like this. Thanks!", "Nicely explained. I enjoyed.", "Expect cooperation in the future! Lots of success in the work! All the best!".

How do you evaluate the course?

65.7%   13.4%   20.1%

- Excellent, it will be useful in my further work
- Useful in every sense
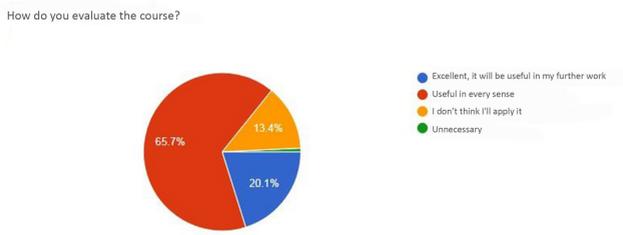- I don't think I'll apply it
- Unnecessary

Figure 4. Evaluation of the course *Linked Open Data and Bibframe*.

RDA and BIBFRAME: a bibliographic description for the 21st century course evaluation confirmed that it is necessary to organize courses on similar topics. Only 13% of participants heard about the RDA standard before (Figure 5), and all the participants in this course gained more than 30% of new information (Figure 6). This shows that the topic of the course is original and up-to-date. Among the comments of the participants we may single out the following: "Course topic is very innovative, popular and practical for libraries", "More courses with similar topic are necessary. I suggest more courses outside of Belgrade."

Thanks to the cooperation with partner institution from European Union, especially Digitisation and Digital Preservation group (DEA group) at University of Innsbruck, Machine learning technology for handwritten manuscripts is from 2016 available at University Library "Svetozar Marković" in Belgrade. The digitization process of handwritten documents is rapidly developing, so we figured that it is necessary to organize a course in this topic for librarians from national, university and public libraries. The course *Democratization of Digitization in Libraries* was accredited in 2018. The participants were introduced to new free of charge tools for handwritten documents scanning and its transcription with a goal to create their auto-
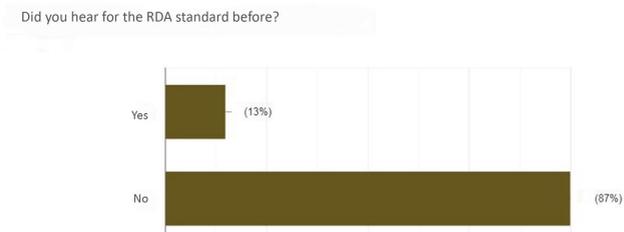
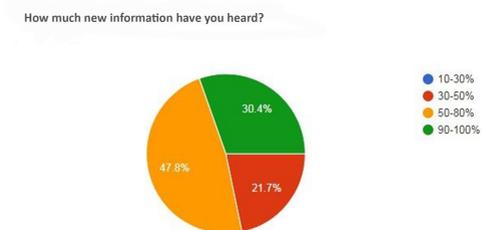**Figure 5.** Already introduced to new cataloguing standards.

Figure 6. Evaluation of the course *RDA and Bibframe.*

matic transcription and full text search using new technologies within this course.

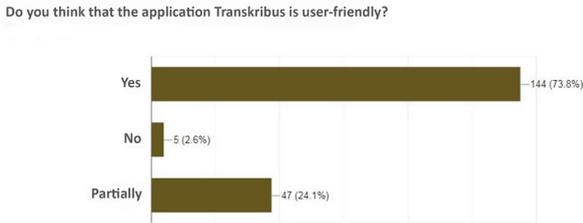Do you think that the application Transkribus is user-friendly?

Figure 7. Tools characteristics evaluation in the course *Democratization of Digitization in Libraries.*

Survey results show that librarians think that new tools are easy to use, that they can be installed in their libraries and that librarians are willing to use them in everyday work. Evaluation of participants regarding course characteristics, its usage and the whole course realization are presented in the figures 7, 8 and 9.
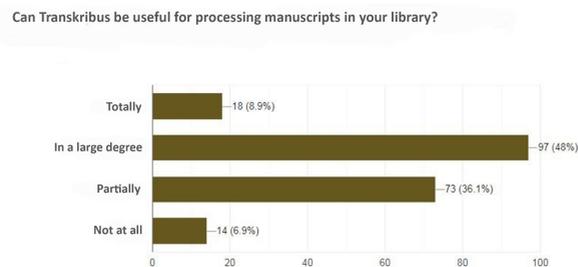
Can Transkribus be useful for processing manuscripts in your library?

Figure 8. Evaluation of tools use value in the course *Democratization of Digitization in Libraries.*

The best indicator that a course was successful is that in the survey there were no answers indicating that a course was unnecessary. On the contrary, participants comments were like: "The course is very informative",

"All information were useful, we will use them in our library", "More courses with similar topic are necessary. This is the best way to introduce librarians to the news in our profession, in order to improve our professional presence on the scientific and cultural scene today", "Great team. I enjoyed and enriched myself with new knowledge"; "The lecture was interesting, easy to understand and very applicable in practice. You have shattered the myth of digitization for many colleagues. Thank you! Best regards!"; "A very interesting and educational course, with excellent lecturers. Thank you and best regards!"; "The course is useful in terms of getting acquainted with new possibilities and techniques of working on the processing of library materials. I am satisfied with the course and the lecturers. I look forward to seeing you again and future cooperation with you and your institution! Best regards!".

Figure 9. Evaluation of the course *Democratization of Digitization in Libraries*.

Due to the great interest of librarian colleagues from all over Serbia, as well as due to the new functionalities of the program content, which in the meantime have become available to us, the course was accredited in 2020 as well. However, due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, there were no possibilities to realize this program in 2020. It is planned to hold it in 2021, if the epidemiological situation allows. There is no possibility to hold the program as an online course since the program is designed as a workshop.

6 Conclusion

The experience of librarians-catalogers from the Library Materials Cataloguing Department of the University Library "Svetozar Marković" shows that individual education, intellectual curiosity and training could bring to building of a prominent professional identity. This identity involves adequate

lecturer skills that enable the retention of the audience's attention, successful transfer of knowledge and the motivation of colleagues for new jobs. Also, based on the analyzed answers in the surveys, it is clear that the participants have a strong need to gain and improve additional skills, knowledge and competencies.

Based on the experience in the preparation and holding of accredited programs, we can conclude that the success of one course depends primarily on two factors: up-to-date topic and interactivity. If we exclude courses that provide the necessary licenses for enabling further work in the bibliographic information system, we can say that a successful course is the one that covers topics that are not part of traditional education, offers plenty of new information necessary in everyday work, shows the horizon of the librarianship worldwide and our place within; and, at the same time, that takes place through practical exercises, in an atmosphere of dialogue and exchange of opinions (Figure 10).
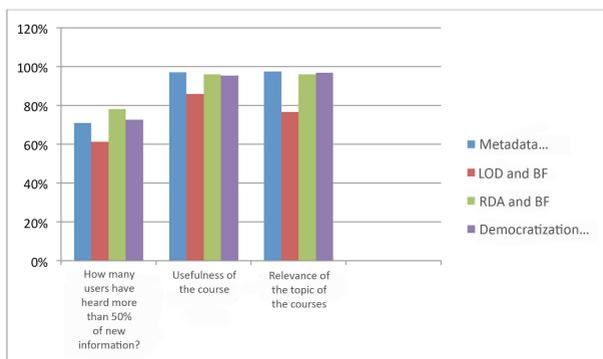

Figure 10. Comparative view of innovation, usefulness and relevance of the topics of the courses held by the Library Materials Cataloguing Department
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Accredited programs have become a traditional meeting place for librarians, a training ground for exchanging ideas and a podium for finding partners for some of the future projects in the field of library and information science. The diversity and topicality of themes offered to the library community on the one hand, and the attendance of certain seminars on the other, speak a lot about the commitment of librarians-educators and also about the desire

to acquire new knowledge and skills by librarians-attendees. Also, some accredited programs have been repeated over the years due to the continuing interest of the participants and the impossibility to organize attendance for all interested persons during one year. We have the opinion that, although legally framed and mandatory, this type of education is currently the best possible method of professional development easily available to all employees in the field of library and information science.

In addition, stepping in the role of a lecturer at accredited seminars, courses and workshops, the traditional librarian separates from the stereotypical image and indicates that his work is very modern, attractive, dynamic and interesting.

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