

“Digital Transformation and Libraries in Special Circumstances” – Conference Report

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PAPER SUBMITTED: 07 March 2022
PAPER ACCEPTED: 16 May 2022

About the conference

The days of special and higher education libraries have been held for many years now. The date of this conference is at the end of April. Initially, the venue was Opatija, a coastal little town in the Republic of Croatia, however, since 2015, the venue has been moved to Lovran, not far from Opatija. This conference is a meeting of librarians from special and higher education libraries. The organizers are: the Croatian Library Association (HKD), the Section for Special and Higher Education Libraries, the National University Library (NSK) from Zagreb, as well as the Library Association and the University Library from Rijeka. The goal is to present higher education libraries that are part of various institutes as well as other institutions whose activities are mainly related to scientific research projects with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Previous conferences covered topics related to the concept and organization of special libraries, as sources and places of using knowledge. In addition, attention is paid to the education of users in education, as well as continuous training of library staff. The library system of Croatian libraries was also analyzed, as was the partnership between libraries in Croatia and those in the region.

Guests from abroad, colleagues from university libraries, representatives of publishers and experts from related professions were all invited to the conference. The program included lectures by invitation, presentations of posters on a given topic, workshops and a presentation of sponsors.

Topics from some of the previous conferences

Extremely interesting topics related to higher education and special libraries were discussed at the previous conferences. Some of them are:

- Libraries, founders, community: dialogue for change
- Connecting and collaborating: opportunities and challenges
- Libraries: where and what is the path forward?
- Establishing quality in special and higher education libraries- libraries in the Bologna area
- A step towards the new Voyager library system
- New strategies in special and higher education libraries, promotion and fundraising
- Partnerships in special and higher education libraries

17 Days of special and higher education libraries

Due to the global pandemic caused by the Covid 19 coronavirus, the 2021 conference was postponed until the end of September, so in 2021 the 17 Days of Special and Higher Education Libraries were held, but in a slightly changed format.

The seventeen days of special and higher education libraries were held in the period from 30th September to 2nd October 2021 in Lovran, in the form a hybrid conference, meaning that the participants were able to attend the conference live in person and virtually. The theme of the conference was “Digital Transformation and Libraries in Special Circumstances”. The presentations were within the following subtopics:

1. Copyright and related rights – new circumstances and digital environment
2. Competence of librarians the work in a digital environment
3. The role and position of libraries in the digital environment
4. Space, services and materials of libraries in the digital environment

The presentations were in the form of invited presentations, round tables, workshops and poster galleries.

The conference was opened by a round table entitled “The role of librarians in supporting scientists with regard to changes in the ways of scientific communication.” Two exhibitors were invited to participate in the round table: Professor Dr. Ivana Kunda, Vice Dean for Science at the University of

Rijeka, also a professor at the Faculty of Law, with a paper on “Hybrid Law Librarian or Librarian Lawyer: however you please in the digital environment” and Professor Dr. Miroslav Rajter, Director of the Research Office at the University of Zagreb with the topic: “How rankings rank us and how we rank the rankings”. Two invited exhibitors were present at the opening of the conference as well: Professor Dr. Tatjana Aparac Jelušić, President of the Coratian Library Council with her work on the topic “Normative framework in the field of higher education libraries” as well as Loida Gracija-Febo, President of the American Library Association 2018-2019 with her topic on “Libraries and digital transformation: supersonic library services in the 2020s”.

The conference was concluded by invited speaker Professor Dr. Miroslav Rajter with a paper on “Trends in the development of Croatian universities from a science perspective”.

All of the works were extremely interesting and useful, however one work needs to be especially emphasized, and that is the work of Renata Petrušić from the National and University Library in Zagreb on the topic “Works which are not available on the market: copyright, digitization, use”. The paper presents the changes brought on by the new Law on Copyright and Related Rights, which relate to works that are not available on the market (out-of-commerce works). The new law enables institutions dealing with cultural heritage to digitize and use works that are not available on the market. The interesting thing is that this law was adopted at the time of the Conference. Considering that in Serbia, out-of-commerce works can only be photocopied, not digitized, perhaps we should consider the possibility of introducing such a law in our country, which would enable digitization of works that are not available on the market.

At the conference, 40 papers were presented as well as 14 poster presentations. The conference was attended by 140 colleagues, 50 of which were physically present and 90 listened to the lectures online. We were especially pleased to learn that during the Conference, the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Standards for Digital Libraries.