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## Enhancing the Quality of the Library Processes - Benchmarking Workplace Information Literacy and Numeracy Practices and Communication Tools in Two European University Libraries

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# Quality management

- Quality management is about information management
- PDCA cycle is a well-known method to conduct activities pursuing improvement
  - P: The library plans: The library studies the current situation and gathers data to be used to establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with the expected output, for instance, in the preparation of the library strategic plan.
  - D: The library does: Once the plan is ready, it must be implemented. During its daily activities, the library processes are executed and services are provided to library users. Some data is collected to be used later, during the review.
  - C: The library checks: Data collected during the performance of the activities are analyzed and a review of the actual achievement of the library objectives is prepared. The data are transformed into information used to prepare the next cycle step.
  - A: The library acts: The findings in the previous phase are the inputs to plan a new cycle. The library should aim towards the future, looking for new targets. Improvement is pursued by setting incremental objectives at every cycle. If the evaluation is showing something that is different from what is expected, it is necessary to put in action necessary adjustments.

# Workplace II

- The vision Paul G. Zurkowski had about information literate citizens in the 1970's was one of future citizens and workforce being able to manage the increasing flow of information and what skills they would need daily in the emerging knowledge-based society.
- The workplace he foresaw is reality at present.
- Libraries and their staff need to process a growing amount of information to respond effectively and on time to the needs of their users.
- It is also important for libraries to show their value to their parent organizations and to society
- So, a well-trained staff is needed, not only to be able to deal with professional literature about the library,
- but also with extensive capabilities of literacy and numeracy skills to facilitate understanding of data and texts within different social contexts (e.g. economic, legal, technological).

# Methodology

- The aim of this study is to investigate how two European university libraries have used communication and management tools to ensure information literacy and numeracy skills for academic librarians to increase the quality of services.
- A qualitative study based on interviews of the library staff
- Two academic libraries, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona Library (UAB) Barcelona, Spain, and University of Eastern Finland Library (UEF), Finland, to compare library service managers' perceptions in each of the institutions.
- The study utilized the PDCA cycle approach to identify different communication tools and literacy and numeracy practices at different phases of the library activities.
- The interviews were conducted by the authors who also act as part of the library management, which may have influenced the interviews.
- A structured interview was designed with a list of fixed questions that were applied to all the interviewees.

# PDCA-cycle and questions based on it

Cycle phase	Themes
<i>Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the main inputs used in the library to plan? [Strategic planning]</li><li>• What are the main threats to deal with the documentation inputs?</li><li>• Which communication tools does the library team use to prepare the plan?</li><li>• Have any problems been detected regarding literacy or numeracy?</li><li>• Benefits, problems, opportunities.</li></ul>
<i>Do</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the main inputs used in the library to carry out daily tasks? [Procedures]</li><li>• What are the main threats in dealing with information in daily work?</li><li>• Which communication tools does the library team use to do their daily work?</li><li>• Have problems been detected regarding literacy or numeracy?</li><li>• Benefits, problems, opportunities.</li></ul>
<i>Check</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the main inputs used in the library for evaluation and/or audit? [Reports &amp; Data]</li><li>• What are the main threats to dealing with the internal data collected for charting and analysis?</li><li>• Which communication tools does the library team use to prepare the annual report and/or evaluation/audit report?</li><li>• Have any problems been detected regarding literacy or numeracy?</li></ul>
<i>Act</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the main inputs used in the library to act? [adjustments to Strategic planning]</li><li>• What are the main threats to dealing with the results of the evaluation / audit?</li><li>• Which communication tools does the library team use to prepare its yearly operational plan?</li><li>• Have any problems been detected regarding literacy or numeracy?</li><li>• Benefits, problems, opportunities</li></ul>

# PDCA-cycle and basic findings

Cycle phase	Findings
<i>Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a lot of internal and external information has to be processed to produce a good plan</li><li>• it requires a lot of effort from the middle managers</li></ul>
<i>Do</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intranet is one stop shopping where to find everything that is needed for daily routines</li><li>• role of the middle managers as interpreters and messengers is important especially due to the information overflow</li><li>• involvement of the staff decreases when library issues are not in focus</li></ul>
<i>Check</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• involvement of all staff on the annual review and reporting helps to strengthen the understanding of the library's mission and strategy</li></ul>
<i>Act</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a culture of improvement facilitate the possibility to make corrections to the library strategy and service production all the time</li></ul>
<i>Complete PDCA-cycle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• well structured quality management and planning system helps the library in managing the PDCA cycle and its daily tasks</li><li>• modern communication tools increase the staff's involvement but it is still very important to hold both formal and informal face-to-face contacts regularly</li><li>• the pressure of information overload may lead to a superficial scanning that could produce a lack of understanding</li></ul>

# Conclusions

- The library staff has a lot of data available to help them in improving the quality of the library services, but they are not always aware of these resources for decision making in everyday working practices, whether through ignorance or lack of skills to utilize them.
- Low use of data resources for management could lead the library to not being able to offer quality services, or in the rapidly changing operational environment, their services may even become outdated.
- Communication tools play an important role in enabling all the staff to access and use the internal information managed by the academic library.
- The study identified several practices where their internal communication network was a facilitator of the library management's strategic goals.

*Thank you for your attention!  
Questions?*

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