

WHERE ARE THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS IN E-LEARNING

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Since Croatia is a transitional country, and an EU candidate country, it is subject to many changes, in education as well as the economy. Present changes can be observed at all levels of education, from the primary schools to the universities. Universities have moved towards Bologna process as well as the implementation of ECT System in order to be compatible and comparable to other European universities. This change will enable exchange of both European and Croatian experts and students.

Academic libraries as a vital part of the traditional educational environment are now forced to reply to the new challenges and user demands concerning shifts in educational paradigm and learning environments. Traditional library knowledge has to be adapted to this new environment and new skills have to be learned and developed. Collaboration between teachers and librarians is now crucial if we want to provide students with the quality education according to the guidelines proscribed by the Bologna process and demanded by the contemporary society. ICT is perceived as a catalyst for these transformations, which will enable the essential transition from traditional educational paradigms, manifested in instructor-led models (passive knowledge reception, teacher as the «gatekeeper» of information, individual effort) to 21st century paradigms manifested in student-centered models (problem solving, teamwork, interacting and processing information, active involvement learning, construction and discovery, problem exploration, customized learning).

In order for these transformation to be fully implemented we have to educate and prepare future Library and information professionals to be confident in using technologies like social and collaborative software, web2.0, and have necessary skills to actively participate in university virtual learning environment as well as to continually develop themselves professionally.

Authors investigate the current situation in the Croatian higher education sector concerning involvement of the academic libraries in their institutions e-learning programs. Furthermore, they offer a model of activities to be performed by the librarians in the virtual learning environment.