

Development of the Readers' Service at the Central Library of the Technical University for Heavy Industry, Miskolc, Hungary

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE READERS' SERVICE AT THE CENTRAL LIBRARY
OF THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY FOR HEAVY INDUSTRY,
MISKOLC, HUNGARY

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Introduction

In speaking of this problem we must first of all not forget about the fact that no sudden sensational development can be expected in the coming years. It is because the library as an institution is not an integral part of either the technical or the social development that could inspire or even cause revolutionary changes. This reluctant statement was indispensable however to define our right place and possibilities. After putting this statement down in black and white however we have to say that in the past 2-3 years the tasks of the library have been multiplied. The readers turning to the library can be classified into three categories: university studies, innovations and technical developments and the self-education by making use of the available general literature. Keeping this estimation in mind the librarian and his colleagues (65 persons) do their best to satisfy the individual interests of the persons belonging to the above mentioned three groups.

According to the plan prepared for the year 1976, the librarian carefully examined the activity of the Department for Readers' Service and Information and this examination resulted in the definition of the tasks of the future.

Within the frames of this short introduction I must refer to two other conditions which speaking of the library must be considered as favourable ones.

a. We have one of the finest and largest reading rooms in Europe with a ground space of 2702 m² and it can be flexibly divided into different areas according to the readers' needs. Here the following services are at the readers' disposal: catalogues, lending from the open shelves and from the stacks, usage of the reserved books collection on the spot (in the reading room for books, in the reading room for periodicals, in the research carrels or in the section where drawing tables are also at the disposal of the library), inter-library lending, reference service, translation service, quick-print machines (the copying is free for the students), a collection of maps and standards.

b. The personnel composition of the department is the best possible (Data valid on 1st January, 1971):

- Number of permanent staff: 17 persons
- Staff members with university degree: 6 persons
- Staff members with secondary school degree: 9 persons
- Staff members with general school degree: 2 persons

From the six persons having university degrees we have a mining engineer, a metallurgical engineer, a mechanical engineer, a chemist-librarian, a psychologist and the sixth member of this group finished his studies in the field of social sciences. All the above mentioned staff members work as subject specialists.

Five of the librarians with secondary school degrees attended different courses and are trained librarians, the other four members of this group have certificates of the final examination at a secondary grammar school.

The two staff members with general school levels work as attendants. Finally I have to mention that the opening hours of the library last from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday to Friday, on Saturdays the library is open from 9 a.m. to 12 and on Sundays the library is closed.

The results of the analysis of the activity of the Readers' Service

1. Positive features

- a. The librarians of the Readers' Service Department, together with the members of the different chairs of the university, took part in the expedient selection of the newly published literature.
- b. The streamlining and refreshing of the bookstock of about 30.000 volumes, that is placed on open shelves in the reading room, were going on continuously.
- c. All the newly acquired books were exhibited in a separate area of the reading room appointed for this purpose for two weeks.
- d. The participation of the industrial firms in the interlibrary loan was constantly increasing and the satisfying of the orders required much and careful work.
- e. The enlargement of the bookstock belonging to the general literature, that is indispensable to the improvement of the general education of our students, was shaping up well. At the date of the investigation we had altogether 30,000 volumes of fiction, artistic albums and other amusing publications to satisfy the individual interests, As far as the acquisition policy is concerned 10% of both the newly acquired books and periodicals belong to the general education. In our opinion it is quite a remarkable effort for a technical university library.
- f. The reference service had the following new achievements:
 - Between the years 1971 and 1976 we could introduce the METADEX computer assisted metallurgical information system in Hungary. The system undertook tasks of national interest and in 1976 it provided bibliographical data for more than 100 themes. Other simultaneous parts of the task were to analyse the original publications, to examine the scattering of the publications and to enlarge the bookstock of the special literature of the fields concerned. The special value of the METADEX system is proved by the fact that the adapting of the system was realized in co-operation with two Hungarian research institutes and that is why the cost of the operation of the system is attractively favourable.
 - For the Faculty of Mining Engineering we made a survey and in a retrospective way we analysed the special literature concerning the earth sciences published in Hungary and we applied here the method of the punched cards for visual selection. For the moment this collection consists of about 4,000 items. Another fact is that among the research done at the university the research work concerning the rare metals is an especially emphasized task of the University. Concerning this latter emphasized function we can say that besides the making of a good use of the possibilities offered by the METADEX we published several bibliographies on the field.
 - Finally we must not forget about the enlargement of the collection of the standards where beside the complete collection of the Hungarian standards we acquired certain collections of standards published in West and East Germany and in the United States.

In my opinion this outline embodies the intentions concerning the plans of our library for the nearest future.

2. The non-positive features occurring in the course of this process of investigation:
 - a. The psychological and sociological survey of the readers' interests was not systematic and was not satisfactory enough.
 - b. No attention was paid to the shaping of the requests for the text books and lecture notes in the future and realistic conclusions for the future were not drawn.
 - c. The services of the library has not had efficient publicity.
 - d. The processing (cataloguing, classification etc.) of the newly acquired books lasted for 30-50 days and this period in our opinion is too long.

The trends of the development of the readers' service and reference service in the near future

Generally speaking we have to achieve a close and rational co-operation between the library and its users. For this purpose the users' needs must be continuously examined, the changes in the needs must be recognized and analysed and the library must be ready to satisfy the new needs at the moment of their occurrence. At a second stage the analysis of the available bookstock must be made together with a sociological survey of our readers. Thirdly, certain modifications of the present services and a critical examination of their efficiency will close the realization of these rational intentions. The essence is that we want to improve, streamline and economize our work in order to achieve a better satisfaction of the users' needs.

The practical aspects

1. Our main task is to efficiently support the educational work of the university. For this purpose our tasks are the following:
 - a. We have to develop a close relationship with the educational administration of the university. We want to be aware of the changes of the learning materials and study plans already at the stage of their preparation in order to efficiently satisfy the new needs. That is why a member of the department is in constant connection with the office of the pro-rector for education.
 - b. The book-stock placed in the reading room is continuously up-dated with the help of the different chairs of the university. Here we have to note that this help is extremely valuable because the books in the reading room are arranged according to the faculties and within the faculties according to the chairs of the university.
 - c. To inform the students about the services of the library a booklet will be published this year in several thousand copies.
 - d. A plan for regular advertising of the services of the library will be prepared in 1977. Within the university we shall make use of the newspaper of the university, the radio studio, the wall newspapers and leaflets. At the same time we shall try to make a greater publicity for the library outside the university as well.

Remark: Speaking of the publicity however we have to be very careful. We do not intend to advertise certain books, periodicals or other publications, because of the limited number of the available copies the "provoked" needs may exceed the real possibilities of the library. We recommend not the single works but a great variety of our services.

2. We want to define and analyse the sociological and psychological aspects of our library's activity. For this purpose in September, 1976 we employed a psychologist, who from the beginning of the year 1977 after a short experimental period became an established employee of the library. This decision also marks our seriousness concerning the satisfaction of the readers' needs and the efficiency of the activities

of our library.

3. Development of the METADEX Information Service:

Instead of the significant increase in the number of our customers we rather want to provide the original publications stored on the magnetic tapes. That is why from the beginning of this year the library guarantees the acquisition of the publications written out by the computer independently of the location of the publication. Within the coming two or three years we want to organize even the translation service of the above mentioned publications and by this the service becomes complete.

4. To improve the inter-library lending service we want to make a treaty for co-operation with the Hannover library (G.F.R.) and with an English library as well.

5. The greatest enterprise of the coming years is to develop a national information system for metallurgy. According to the present ideas the system will be developed by our library and 18 industrial firms and research institutes interested in the problem. The main items of this programme are the following:

- a. to prepare a thesaurus
- b. to purchase an IBM computer of great capacity and put it to work
- c. to develop the input by adapting other, already elaborated systems in order to reduce the necessary processing to a minimum level
- d. to set up terminal stations with all the partners
- e. to create the literary basis specifying according to the types of the publications using a common financial source and to develop good international relations.
- f. within this national system the METADEX will lose its independence and become an integral part of the system
- g. the duration of this process: 1977-1981.

These were the facts and the plans I wanted to speak about concerning the readers' service and reference service of our library. I have to emphasize the necessity and the advantages of the co-operation in the course of the realization of our plans and last but not least the help that could be given by the IATUL, the help we claim.