

University yesterday, today and tomorrow

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Abstract

“The Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna” is the oldest (1088) continually operating university in the world. During the next 300 years, European Universities educated almost 600,000 people and had a great impact on the development of European Civilization.

Johannes Gutenberg introduced modern book printing in 1455, which is now widely regarded as the most important event of the modern European history. Printing revolution opened a new era for Universities and played a key role in the development of Europe.

The main purposes and goals of universities remained the same for centuries (research, teaching and public services), but today the system of higher education is under tremendous pressure to meet great expectations and needs of societies. The main general challenges and trends are: advancement, globalization and internationalization of higher education. We could add a few other problems: absorption of new technologies, development of life-long-learning tools, distance education, digitalization, demand for better learning and student experience and the global mobility of talent.

We all see that the world around universities is undergoing a significant change. Universities have to help and address such topical issues as shortage of energy and food, environmental pollution, minimizing the impact of the financial crisis on global economy, social exclusion.

Is it time to redefine Universities aims and methods, their role in today’s Internet society. The main objective is simple and clear: to create a peaceful, inter-dependent world that would be a good place for people to live in.