Application of qualitative methods in researching academic library users: Some practical experience

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Abstract
Considering constant and rapid development of information technologies as well as changes in academic education, information literacy (IL) programs have become a necessity in academic institutions, including Croatian Law Faculties. Librarians at the law faculties have to instruct users in searching, using and evaluating information sources through various programs, while considering the specific aspects in the field of law. However, for a successful implementation and creation of an IL programs, librarians need to understand the information behaviour of their users and the context of the institution in order to best create and adapt these programs to their information needs.

Modern trends in the study of information behaviour of users recommend the implementation of numerous qualitative research methods that enable finding a solution to a better understanding of the information behaviour and preferences of users, as well as a deeper understanding of the context phenomenon. Considering the above mentioned the following question arises: What qualitative methods are to be used in the study? When and how to apply them to obtain good results?

On the example of the used methods case studies, content analysis and in-depth interviews in the research of the user competences in the field of law, we will show challenges that a researcher encounters in the stages of the research process, implementation, assessment, analysis and interpretation of results.

On the basis of the specific research experience, we will try to determine to what extent the used methods are agreeable and whether the "sensitivity" of instruments is appropriate to obtain data for research of information behaviour of users and do they enable us the understanding of the deeper context of the afore mentioned phenomena.

REFERENCES

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