The support of the university library to students’ learning in the field of humanities and social sciences in the digital environment

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There are various types of library users - they behave differently in interaction with digital resources.

Changes in the information environment have influenced the information behavior of students and the way in which they seek, find, and use information resources for learning.
• Preferences of the new generation of students toward e-sources and new technologies affect the way of their reading and learning.

• Many studies attempted to identify user information behavior by:
  - faculty
  - researchers
  - students
• Most studies refer to the
  - western countries
  - English-speaking countries

• The results cannot be generalized across different user groups and cultures

• There are no research of information behavior of Croatian students
This thesis will explore the information behavior of students of social sciences and humanities in the context of learning and support from the university library.

Why social sciences and humanities?
What is happening with learning, especially in humanities that are oriented toward printed sources?

These questions will be addressed with research questions which follow.
RELEVANT THEORIES OF LEARNING

• constructivism

- in the basis of this study is constructivist theory

- it is a view of learning based on belief that knowledge is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of development; learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge
INFORMATION LITERACY

Constructivism is characterized by:

- individual work
- interaction with the information sources

- individual should acquire certain skills and abilities such as:
  - search and retrieval of information sources
  - selection and analysis

that are also elements of information literacy
• Connectivism:

- new approach to learning

- students use new technology to form their own information networks, including the learning communities

- students participate in the knowledge creation process, rather than only consuming information
• “Google” generation and communication technologies as an important tool for education-related information

• Implications for learning and role of libraries

• How learning has changed?

• Do the library follows the trend of new generations to learn and read?

• What happens to the reading of printed sources, especially for the humanities?
• Students interaction with information sources
  - traditional
  - electronic

is of great importance for the development of collections and services of the university library
The focus of this research:

- the role of university library

- in supporting learning of undergraduate student of humanities and social sciences

- regarding changes in the information environment
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

• Digital text (Reinking, 2001) might be conceived as a unique configuration of:

  - symbol systems
  - technologies
  - contents
  - situations of use
Reinking (2001) believes that digital text:

- naturally promote an active orientation to reading

- are easier to read for more readers

- fulfill a wide range of social and psychological needs

- and make reading a creative, playful and less serious activity
• Carr (2010) warns that reading digital text calm, focused, linear mind is giving way to new kind of mind that use short and fast information.
• Liu (2006) examines:

- the extent to which graduate students use print and digital resources

- the importance of subject discipline to reading preferences and use of print and digital resources

- circumstances affecting the choice between physical and digital libraries
• Correlation of subject disciplines and preferences for print or digital resource exploring

- Torma and Vakkari (2004)
- Kortlainnen (2004)
- Dilevko and Gottlieb (2002)
• Tenopir (2003)
  - report for the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)
  - summarizes and analyzes more than 200 research publications that focus on the use of electronic library resources (1995 – 2003)

• Rowlands (2007)
  - overview of the key aspects of changes in journal systems, especially in their use
• Smith (2003)

- reading preferences of science and social science faculty

- both disciplines and all ranks of faculty read a significant portion of journal articles via electronic sources

- slight disciplinary differences in electronic article readership: more science faculty reported reading electronic articles than social science faculty
• Siebenberg et al. (2004)

- comparison of the use of digital and print journals

- in various disciplines at the University of Washington

- showed that e-access increased paper use
• Wang (2010)

- explores the characteristic of information needs of social scientists

- scholarly journals are important information resources

- language and contextual factors might have influence on scholarly journal use
Marcum (2003) raises three basic issues related to changing expectations and demands to the library and its role in the digital environment:

• How is digital resource users best served?
• What resources will they want?
• How will they want to use them and what services will most enhance use?

• What elements are required for a coherent preservation strategy covering digital and traditional resources?

• What kinds of education will “librarians” of the future need?
Tenopir (2003)

• Are librarians, as intermediaries to the search process, still necessary in the digital age?

• How the differences between separate article and full journal databases affect the way research is done?

• How is the change to digital information sources affecting the scholarly work of college and university students?
Aim of the thesis:

• The aim of this thesis is to explore if the university library, with its resources and services, meets the needs of new generations of students in the field of social sciences and humanities?

• What patterns of learning are created under the influence of digital technology?

• Whether and how digital technology has changed students learning patterns in the field of social sciences and humanities regarding the body of literature which is mostly printed?
It generates specific research questions:

• Do digital media affect the student learning patterns in the field of social sciences and how?
• Do digital media affect the student learning patterns in the field of humanities and how?

• Do the university library resources and services, meet the needs of new generations of students in the field of social sciences and humanities?

• Do the library services in the digital environment satisfy student needs?
The research methodology

- Content analysis of curricula of two courses from humanities and two courses from social sciences
- Focus groups:
  to gather information about
  - patterns of learning
  - preferences of information sources which students use in social sciences and humanities
  - students opinion about library services
  - students satisfaction regarding their needs

On the basis of which a questionnaire would be developed.
The questionnaire explores:

- the patterns of learning

- information behavior in regard of used printed and digital resources

- attitudes and preferences of students related to the resources of university libraries

- students' satisfaction with library services in the digital environment
The sample

- The survey will include
  - undergraduate students (250)
  - in the field of humanities and social sciences
  - at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split
EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION

• The research results will contribute to the development of new paradigms on a theoretical level.

• The practice will serve to create guidelines for university libraries to make their collections and services based on user needs, not on popular trends and on the research of significantly different user groups.
THANK YOU!


