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Information Behaviour of University students

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The European universities, among them Spanish universities, began in the year 1999, through the *Bologna Accords*, a convergence process toward a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This process will conclude in the year 2010 with a new university model. Because of this model the management structures will be configured around an education focused in the student's learning, so information technologies will play a fundamental role in that learning.

This change in the university structures, is assuming a change in the traditional university library and other administrative services. In this period of European convergence, the Learning & Investigation Resources Centers (called CRAI in Spanish argot) have arisen in the Spanish university. The CRAI are organizational units that, in an integrated way, provide basic educational resources to the university community. Likewise, other information services of the university (secretary, tutorships, etc) will also provide in an agile way all the necessary information for the realization of any academic step.

However, the design and planning of these services has been done from the perspective of the ideal organizational structure and theoretical point of view and has not been done from the future user's perspective. Moreover, the rhythm in which these services have settled down is different according to universities. Thus, there are universities that were born with a clear vocation in providing integrated services through virtual platforms. But others, with a longer history, they still keep close to the doors of the year 2010, the traditional university model.

The **objectives** of this research are:

To describe the information behaviour (informational problems related to academic life, strategies for their acquisition and use) of the students of two Spanish universities in two different contexts: a virtual campus (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya - UOC) and an on-site campus (Universitat de València – UVEG)) in order to extract practical recommendations for the information systems planning according to the user's information needs.

To analyze the educational styles, in terms of training in the use of the information resources.

To validate the use of an inductive approach, the grounded theory, in the study of the informative behaviour.

A qualitative **research approach** is used. According to Strauss y Corbin (1990) is used when there is a need to go out into the field in order to understand a phenomenon and when the experience is continuously evolving. The tool used to collect data of this research is the in depth and semi-structured interview and for the analysis of the data the principles of the grounded theory are applied. The sample used in this study reflects the principle of *maximum variation sampling*, as defined by Patton (1987) in order to obtain relatively small simple but very diverse and to obtain a rich picture of the students information behaviour.

This is an investigation in progress and **expected results** are as follows:

The relative utility of university library, as a service to assist the informative problems that arise in academic life.

The partial utility of the general information services of the university.

The importance of interpersonal communication for the access to information.

The importance of the Internet as a way to access information in front of the little importance of the traditional university library.

REFERENCES

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