

PERCEPTION OF LIBRARY 2.0: THEORETICAL CONCEPT OR PRACTICAL MODEL FOR INNOVATIVE AND SERENDIPITOUS DISCOVERY SERVICES? DRIVERS AND IMPACTS IN THE ROMANIAN LIBRARIES

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Abstract

Library 2.0 is a theoretical concept launched by Casey in 2005, which has been transformed into a practical model applied worldwide by the libraries ready to move toward major change and innovation, willing to redefine and revitalize their services in accordance with users' needs and expectations, accepting users' participation as communication partners and knowledge contributors. Library 2.0 represents a virtual set of library user-centered services, built on solid principles like radical trust, collective intelligence, creative thinking, collaboration, openness, community knowledge management, content free use and reuse, social networking, people interactivity and feedback encouragement. It is supported by the Web 2.0 technologies, configured as a public sphere, providing an innovative platform for knowledge dissemination for library users and nonusers with the aim of bringing them into the library virtual or physical environment. Library 2.0 uses both the Web 2.0 tools and specialized instruments like the Next Generation Catalogue or the open access information repository which offer unexpected, serendipitous ways of information discovery. The Library 2.0 challenge has been taken up by the Romanian libraries. The paper presents a brief overview of the Romanian libraries response to this challenge, investigating the status of Library 2.0 tools acceptance and implementation, pointing out the Library 2.0 drivers and impacts in the Romanian information and documentary structures.

Keywords: Library 2.0, Romanian libraries, Next Generation Catalogue, OPAC 2.0, Discovery Layer, Technology usage.

1. Introduction

Since 2005, when Michael Casey[2] came up with the “Library 2.0” term, the library professionals within the library environment worldwide have been very active in debating the role of Library 2.0 model, its functional characteristics and social features, its benefits and impacts on the library services and users, its relation to other traditional or modern library models. The libraries have adopted and implemented in different ways the Library

2.0 model, willing to overcome the threat coming from the Internet search engines, applications, and services, being ready to accept fundamental changes and innovation, to improve the library services and the library users relationship, to transform the library into a more flexible, visible, open, communicative, socialized and intelligent organization, to demonstrate that the Library 2.0 approach can really “make the library human, ubiquitous, and user-centered”. [5]

The Library 2.0 model is supported by the Web technologies, following the same Web 2.0 underlying principles, it opens up unforeseen possibilities of sharing ideas, and knowledge, of discovering and accessing information which can be freely used and reused. It is a community-building environment which enables, beyond asynchronous and synchronous interaction, a real bi-directional communication between the library and the patrons. Both the users and the nonusers are invited to participate and contribute, they are getting a face and an identity emerged from the compact mass of the people, becoming equally consumers and producers of information, the so-called prosumers [12] Toffler was talking about.

2. Library 2.0 – theoretical concept. Literature review

Charles Cutter wrote in 1876, in his “Rules for a Dictionary Catalogue”, about the principle of the “convenience of the public” [3]. More than one hundred years later, the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records conceptual model was set to better respond to the users’ needs in their attempt to find, identify, select and obtain information, while IFLA takes up, in 2009, in the “Statement of International Cataloguing Principles” document, the Cutter’s concern regarding the convenience of user in the bibliographic catalog construction principles.

Following this principle, the Library 2.0 model is above all, a user-centered platform, focused on its customers’ expectations. Casey and Savastinuk state that “the heart of Library 2.0 is the user-centered change” [2], considering this model as a virtual and physical service for the next generation libraries. They define Library 2.0 by three elements: constant change, users’ empowerment through participation and cumulative customer-driven services attempting to reach the potential users and better serving the current ones.

According to Maness, Library 2.0 can be defined as “the application of interactive, collaborative, and multimedia web-based technologies to web-based library services and collections.” [8] Another point of view is provided by Brevick [1] who considers that Library 2.0 represents a natural evolution of the library services at a level in which the user has the control over the access to information and library services in terms of time, and method.

There are some critical voices which argue that Library 2.0 is a slogan without substance [4] and represents for the librarians only a game with the Web 2.0 technologies [4]. Nesta and Mi [9] are not enthusiastic about the Library 2.0 benefits, pointing out that libraries have always been focused on the users’ needs by opening their doors to longer

hours and offering open stacks, computers labs, online access catalogues, group study rooms, instruction sessions, reference services by e-mail, forums and discussion lists, library tours, brochures. Even the Ranganathan's laws are a proof of the reader-oriented library approach. More than that, Gorman and Crawford [10] added other five laws ("Libraries serve humanity", "Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated", "Use technology intelligently to enhance service", "Protect free access to knowledge", "Honor the past and create the future"), Noruzi proposed a new interpretation of the laws in the web environment and Simpson [11] suggested an updated form determined by the media richness ("Media is for use", "Every patron his information"). An OCLC report suggests that the 5 laws have to be reinterpreted „to reflect the today's library resources and services, as well as the behaviors that people demonstrate when engaging with them”.[13]

The Library 2.0 model [7] is, according to Lankes, a participatory library, enabling an interactive communication between users and library that become, alternatively, transmitter and receptor of a message. The Academic Library 2.0 Concept Model v2 proposed by Michael Habbib [6] refers to the Library 2.0 as a collaborative space where the boundary between physical and virtual has vanished. This approach emphasizes the fact that Library 2.0 does not replace the library; it is a part of it, a subset of the library services, which supplements and improves them. The Farkas [5] model underlines the essence of Library 2.0 which consists in focusing on patrons' needs, not on the Library 2.0 tools.

3. Library 2.0 – practical model

Resuming the definitions and the theoretical models shaped by different authors, the Library 2.0 model can be considered a Habermasian public sphere transposed into the virtual environment of knowledge. In this context, the most important elements of the Library 2.0 model could be: users' empowerment through participation in the creation of content, a continuously growing collection of full-text electronic resources accessible online, a more interactive communication between users and library, change and innovation, next-generation library tools.

In the real life, the Library 2.0 practical model is sustained by the following solid pillars:

- Web 2.0 technologies, as part of everyday life online;
 - Extensive Websites for information dissemination, online access to local&worldwide resources and services, communication with the library users and nonusers, specialized assistance through e-mail and chat, digital marketing of library services, events and exhibitions promotion, international visibility;
 - Discovery tools for innovative and serendipitous resource discovery services:
 - Discovery Interfaces, so called Next Generation Catalogues or OPAC 2.0 – tools which operate at a similar level of sophistication and attractiveness as Google, Amazon or other popular Web sites, providing an intelligent and efficient platform for resource discovery;
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- Web-scale discovery services or Index - based discovery services, like Summon, Ebsco Discovery Systems, WorldCat Discovery Service and Primo Central which provide a unique point of entry to all library resources through a single consolidated index including bibliographic descriptions of the collections items, locally managed by the library integrated system, electronic bibliographic and full-text resources harvested from the subscribed databases and from the library's digital repositories;
- Federative search tools, like Metalib and Millenium Access Plus, for information searching and retrieval across multiple, *heterogeneous* and distributed library databases;
- Digital platforms made up of digital libraries and institutional repositories, including and mixing digital objects in various formats, which are described using technical, preservation and administrative metadata, representing digitized items selected from the library's collections and born-digital resources supplied by the librarians, researchers, professors and students.

Being worldwide accepted and adopted by academic and public libraries, the model demonstrates its viability in the real life, providing enhanced library services, changing attitudes, giving voice to the library users and putting in place new information discovery tools customized for the users' needs and their search behavior.

4. Drivers and impacts in the Romanian libraries

The Romanian libraries are trying to keep pace with the rapidly changing of technological environment and to develop the library services according to the new trends on the international level.

In this respect, the Romanian public libraries have highly adopted Web 2.0 tools. Among the 42 public libraries which have been analyzed (National Library and Metropolitan Library are included), there are only 2 libraries with no web 2.0 technology, 40 libraries are using Facebook (in 2015, 20 public libraries implemented Facebook), there are 14 blogs, 9 YouTube, 5 Twitter, 4 Flickr, 4 IM, 3 RSS and 1 installation of Picasa, Slideshare, Scribd, G+. In total, the public libraries are using 13 Web 2.0 technologies. There are 17 libraries interested in implementing only one Web 2.0 tool, 13 libraries have adopted 2 Web 2.0 technologies, two public libraries offer 6 Web 2.0 tools and one library is using 7 Web 2.0 tools. The graphic indicates that the interest of the Romanian public libraries in setting up a participatory institution is growing from one year to another.

Library integrated systems are implemented in 31 public libraries (73%), 21 of these choosing to work with Next-Generation Catalogues: TinRead is used in 17 libraries, eBibliophil is implemented in 6 libraries and Qulto in 2 libraries. There are also 3 Liberty installations, 2 Aleph library systems, 2 TinLib systems and 2 installations of Qulto - the older version.

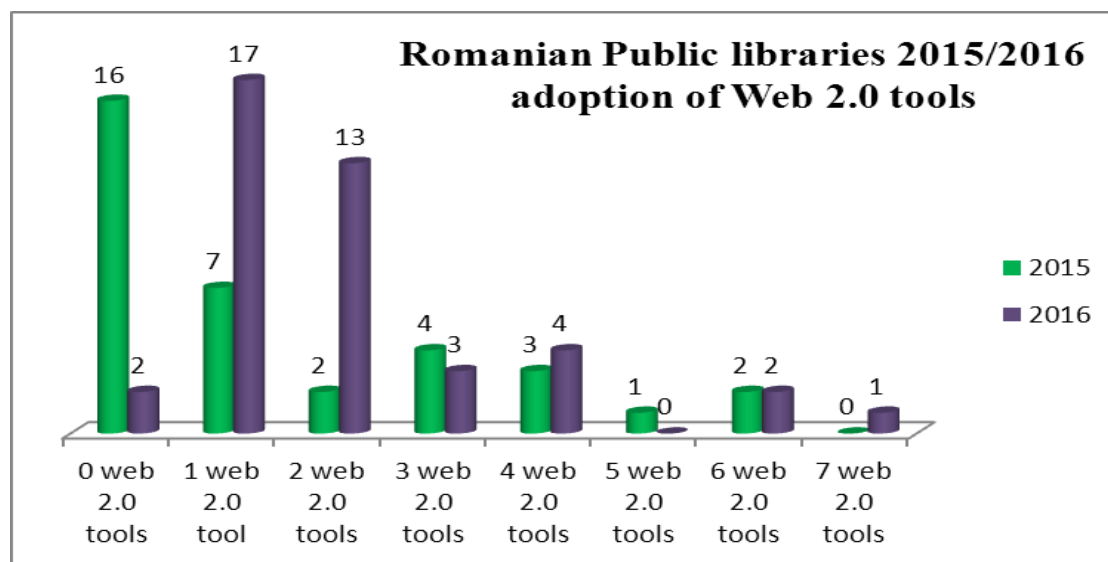


Figure 1 Adoption of Web 2.0 tools by the Romanian Public Libraries – 2015/2016

In contrast to public libraries, the rate of adoption of the Library 2.0 model by the Romanian academic libraries is quite low. The assessment of 58 university libraries, including the four central university libraries in Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj and Timisoara reveals that 36 libraries (62%) have no Web 2.0 tools, 19 libraries have 2 Web 2.0 tools and only 3 libraries are interested in sharing information through 2 web 2.0 channels. The range of Web 2.0 technologies chosen by the academic libraries is narrow, only 4 web 2.0 tools being used in this environment.

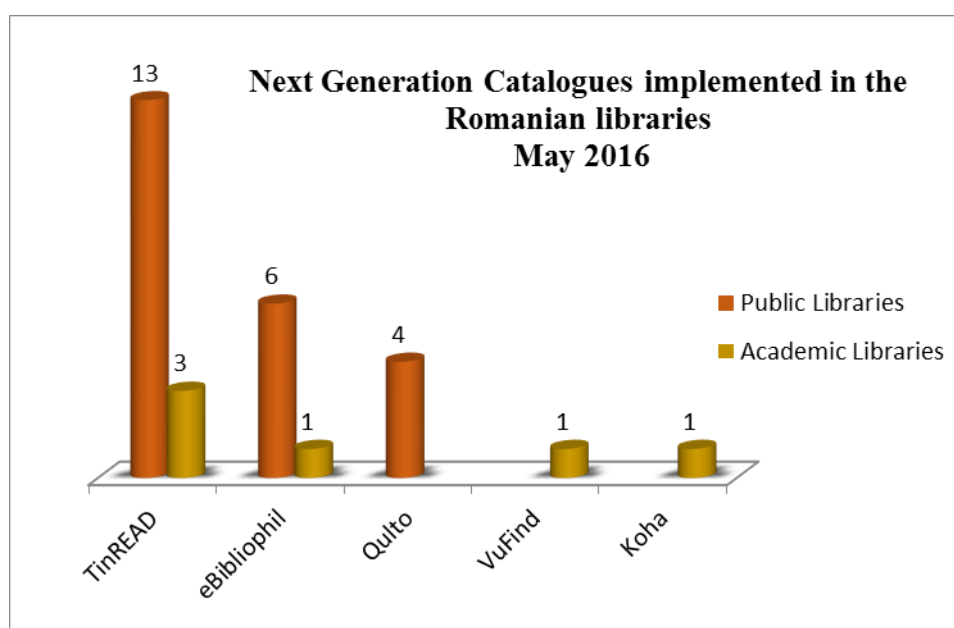


Figure 2 Next Generation Catalogues in the Romanian Libraries

Regarding the implementation of discovery layers systems, there are four Next Generation Catalogues functioning in 6 libraries: TinRead is used in 3 libraries,

eBibliophil is installed in 1 library, Koha was recently implemented in 1 library and VuFind is used in 1 library. The other academic libraries are using automated systems like Liberty (19 installations), Aleph (8 installations), TinLib (3 installations), VubisSmart (1 installation), Alice (1 installation) and Alephino (1 installation).

In the academic environment, there are two Web-scale Discovery services which are used within the ANELIS PLUS consortium, providing users with a one-stop shop searching over the virtual collection of the library's accessible and subscribed resources. EDS (Ebsco Discovery System) and Summon are the Web-scale discovery services available for the affiliated libraries, offering to their users access to the subscribed scientific databases based on IP address within the library premises and mobile access through a personal account and password.

Federated search services are provided at national level through Rolinest and Biblio.ro. The Rolinest portal is built on Metalib product, whereas Biblio.ro is sustained by TinRead, both platforms allowing the users to submit a single query which performs a search in multiple distributed and heterogeneous databases, displaying real-time, aggregated results through a unique interface.

Another important pillar of the Library 2.0 practical model consists of digital platforms built for storing and managing digital objects and the associated metadata, representing the cultural heritage hosted by the library and/or the intellectual output of both library and host university. In Romania, there are 8 institutional repositories registered in ROAR (Registry of Open Access Repositories) based on Dspace open software: APAS/SNSPA, ARTHRA/Dunarea de Jos University - Galati, IRCULB / Central University Library "Carol I" Bucharest, ASsee Online Series – SNSPA, ICESBA / Fundatía Romania de maine and NOS / World Economy Institute.

There are also several digital libraries developed by different libraries and cultural institutions. Among them, National Digital Library developed by the National Library, DacoRomanica set up by the Metropolitan Library, Restitutio set-up by the Central University Library "Carol I", e-Patrimoniul developed by CIMEC- the national aggregator for Europeana. At the moment, the Romanian contribution to Europeana is very low - 172.186 digital objects [14], in January 2016, representing 0.4% of total minimum contribution set in the Commission Recommendation. The most significant contribution comes from the Central University Library "Lucian Blaga". The Culturalia project, initiated by CIMEC, has as main objective for 2020 to open up a significant critical mass of over one million digital objects supplied by the Romanian libraries and cultural institutions.

5. Conclusion

The Library 2.0 challenge has been taken up by the Romanian libraries in different manners. The public libraries are more flexible and active, much more open to innovation and change in opposition to academic libraries which are still conservative,

know-it-all and rigid institutions, still struggling to adopt the 2.0 technologies, with some exceptions.

Recognizing that the main mission of the library can be better served by providing access to information and facilitating creation of knowledge through participation, communication and content sharing, the Romanian libraries are engaged in setting up the Library 2.0 model as a user-centered, network-based platform delivering rich library content and library enhanced services.

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