

Stuttgart Media University
International Summer School 2009
Workshop 5:
Strategic Management for Electronic Publishing : Scholarly
Information in Today's Electronic Environment
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Outline

My purpose of attending this workshop was to get acquainted with practical experiences with electronic publishing policy and practice and scholarly communication in scientific disciplines at foreign universities. In particular it was intended to learn changes in the information needs of users of electronic resources in order to determine what type of tools and services they prefer.

The workshop was focused on starting points and current trends in electronic publishing in science and development with the emphasis on changes in the environment of scientific information. During the three-day program of the workshop we discussed topics concerning management of electronic publishing as a form of scientific communication from the perspective of the data providers with regards to the changing user requirements.

The workshop was lectured by Dr. John Regazzi, professor at the College of Information and Computer Science at Long Island University in New York. Prior to this he worked at the headquarters in American division of Elsevier Corporation. He was responsible for the development of Science Direct digital library and Scirus scientific search engine. All topics and conclusions discussed were introduced as results of his professional experience.

Program

At the beginning Dr. Regazzi introduced the trend of the increase of electronic publishing from the authors', publishers', information providers' and end users' perspectives. He also discussed what value it provides to publishers and users. Special emphasis was put onto the change in business model of open access journal publishing and its impact on university libraries budgets and scientists' and researchers' information behavior and search patterns.

This initial talk introduced all less or more related areas and gave a very interesting comprehensive overview of the topic not only for the purpose of the workshop.

Following this introduction we analyzed a case study of once strong and esteemed traditional information source Encyclopedia Britannica that almost did not survive the upcoming of digital publication era. This case study pointed out serious problems of the transition from the traditional to digital form of publishing that publishers have had to deal with. Our “homework” was to analyze its business strategy and thought about what could have been done differently for Encyclopedia Britannica to remain scientific information resource number one even in the digital age.

The second day after reviewing the Encyclopedia Britannica case, we discussed the issue of a scientific journal, its purpose, historical development, and current publishing process. We analyzed all key elements of the journal publishing industry – scientific journal and an article as basic elements, its role and development in scientific communication, and the information behavior and requirements of authors and end users.

In the afternoon we followed by introducing three related issues of electronic publishing: How shall publishers and information providers deal with the upcoming change and innovation? How to conduct efficient and effective strategic planning related to electronic publishing in a scientific institution? SWOT analysis was introduced as one of the most common tools for strategic planning in any business field. We conducted a sample SWOT analysis of the Summer School to experience how to look at any business area from all perspectives. That includes providers’, market, and users’ perspectives. As a further exercise to be able to analyze any kind of business in all consequences we did a field study at a cafe of our choice. The task was to analyze a particular cafe and its competition environment and suggest innovations and improvements.

The last day was devoted to discuss new alternative models of electronic publishing (Open Access) regarding benefits and requirements of authors, publishers and information providers. We were introduced the policy of Open Access journal publishing and its main differences from the traditional publishing model. Statistics were shown how the numbers of open access journals and publishers have been growing since about ten years ago. A number of universities establish institutional repositories of open access research articles as a result of 2005 Berlin Open Access conference. It was

also talked about the fact that the Open Access business model shifts around the financing policy of journal publishing. That has got quite a significant impact on the authors' publishing behavior and universities budgeting and is also a possible reason why in many geographical areas Open Access is not much expanded.

As the last step to complete all aspects of electronic publishing process we discussed how to manage costs of electronic services with regards to university budgeting. Several budgeting strategies were introduced and we further looked at some examples of problems with budgeting university processes.

Due to the lack of time we unfortunately did not discuss the matter of changing users' information behavior in the electronic environment. Dr. Regazzi although handed us out all the materials and presentation he had prepared. These present an interesting survey of the impact of electronic publishing on the information behavior and habits when seeking and searching for information of users in various scientific disciplines.

Social events

During the program we had two very nice social evening programs. The first evening we gathered with all Summer School participants in a restaurant in the center of Stuttgart. It was very nice to get together and had a chance to talk to participants from various destinations as well as the head of the faculty and Summer School organizers.

The second social event gathered all speakers at the Summer School with foreign library professionals. It was a beautiful trip to some of the pretty outskirts of Stuttgart, the traditional vineyard area followed by an excellent dinner. It was a very nice evening and it was a wonderful opportunity to get together with other faculty members involved at Summer School program. In particular it was an outstanding opportunity to discuss various topics that I also deal with at my university straight with people involved with those topics at Stuttgart Media University. I had some very nice conversations about other current issues of library services as well as various very pleasant conversations. At this point, I would like to thank very much for the opportunity to join this evening program and for the wonderful time I had there.

Conclusions and personal contributions

This year it was the second time the summer school and this workshop were held by the Stuttgart Media University. It was also the second time Dr. Regazzi came to lead this workshop. He has been a great leader for this topic having experiences from a high management of an information producer organization and from a university environment.

The workshop introduced a broad scope of issues related to electronic publishing and open access issues. It covered all steps that have to be realized when developing and managing electronic publishing process. All sub-steps were very nicely introduced as individual parts of general business process and were related to information services. This way we got to understand information and library services as one area of business in its full range. As library professionals we got to look at these processes also from the commercial business perspective. It was also great to have a chance to experiment each separate point by a sample case study or field experience.

In my personal viewpoint, the workshop more than fulfilled my expectations. The topic was presented and discussed in a very broad scope and with a lot of details. By very easy and interactive form it provided a complex overview and revealed all related points. The knowledge gained I will certainly use for planning and designing new value-added tools and services for scholars and researchers at my home university. Also indisputable benefit was to personally meet colleagues who have been involved with the same topic in different countries and at various universities, namely Dr. Regazzi, my workshop colleagues as well as representatives from the host institution.

I would like to thank the Stuttgart Media University organizing team and BI International for letting me participate at the workshop. I had a very good time, I enjoyed very much the program and stay in Stuttgart and I will certainly like to recommend any of my colleagues to participate in the following years.