NEW CHALLENGES, NEW SKILLS FOR A DIGITAL LIBRARY

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Abstract

The Andalusian eHealth Library (BV-SSPA) was set up in 2006, but the region already had 42 librarians who worked at hospitals or other centers and were in charge of their libraries. The Digital Library meant for all of them the availability of a greater amount of scientific resources and also the challenge of adapting to this new environment which brought new tasks and responsibilities to their daily work, and required the development of new skills.

The time has arrived to analyze how they have implemented this change and how it has transformed their professional profile within the Andalusian Health System.

Nowadays, the Andalusian eHealth Library establishes the librarian’s targets and their work is evaluated according to the fulfillment of these targets. This evaluation is carried out by the director of the BV-SSPA, taking into account the performance related to the general stated targets, as well as their level of commitment to the Digital Library through the performing of specific assigned tasks.

Key words: digital, library, librarian, profile, role, skills

Introduction

Andalusia is one of the biggest regions in Spain, divided into eight provinces with more than 8 million inhabitants who have one of the largest Health System in Europe at their disposal. This Health System is composed of 47 hospitals, more than 1,500 Primary Healthcare Centers and 28 centers which have other purposes such as training, research or administration. All this system is staffed by 90,000 health professionals.

The quality of health systems is measured in terms of the staff qualification and the resources they have available. In this sense, the setting up of the Andalusian eHealth Library in 2006 comes to fulfill the guidelines of the Second Quality Plan for Health defined for the period 2005-2008.

This project came true thanks to the commitment of the Andalusian government and that of the professionals who worked at the scientific documentation departments of all the organizations belonging to the Health System. Forty two librarians were involved in the development, implementation and improvement of a Library which has become a Best Practice Model in Europe.

Objectives
The decision to create a digital library in 2006 for a Spanish region with more than 40 hospitals, 1,500 primary care centers and 28 centers for non-medical purposes, which attended a population of more than 8 million inhabitants was a turning point in the strategy of the Andalusian Health Ministry, but it also constituted a big challenge for the librarians who had worked at the Health System, most of them for more than 20 years.

The skills developed by these librarians and the new profiles needed to ensure the sustainability of the Andalusian eHealth Library are the object of this study.

Methods

In 2006 the Andalusian Health System was composed of a large number of hospitals, training, research and emergency centers which contracted their resources independently. Each one worked as an operational unit taking decisions concerning purchases which affected the staff, faculty and patients of their individual organizations. In this sense, there were 42 librarians who worked separately in their centers and were not connected to each other. The central purchasing meant for the Health System a saving percentage of 25% of the previous budget, and in terms of staff, the creation of a librarian network\(^3\).

Most of these librarians were professionals who had worked for the system for at least 20 years, mostly at big hospitals. Other newly created hospitals had recruited new staff with specific studies or training as librarians.

The general librarian profile was a professional who had worked for many years in a library within the system, developing their attitudes and tasks but without a real network among them.

With the arrival of the Digital Library they had to acquire new skills to work in this new scenario: a digital platform where all the health scientific resources and services were at the disposal of the end user.

Nevertheless, their experience and know-how were essential to the development of this project. All of them participated in the setting up of the Library and were involved in the implementation of it. A multidisciplinary team was created, composed of information technologists and librarians in order to create the following applications in accordance with the librarians’ expertise in the research support field

- Meta-Searcher
- Central Inter-Library Loan Program
- Online Training Platform
- Remote Access Application
- Research Output quantification System
- Institutional Repository
- User Assistant Service Platform
- Social Networks
Besides that, the head office provided them with the proper training to reach the necessary abilities to perform as e-librarians. During this time the BV-SSPA has provided them with the following courses among others:

- Interlibrary loan and catalogue managing system
- Scientific Resources in the Digital Platform
- The functioning of most important publisher platforms
- The functioning of the database contracted by the Digital Library
- Information management
- Reference managers
- Evidence based resources
- Web 2.0 and social network
- Marketing to libraries and the relationship with the end user
- Resources for training. The creation of specific tools for training. E-learning
- Web of Knowledge
- Institutional repositories
- Drupal
- Metadata
- Scopus
- How to publish in high impact factor scientific journals
- Open access
- Netvibes
- Mashups
- Online reference services
- Bibliometric techniques for health science
- Presentations with Powerpoint and PREZI
- Dspace
- Health 2.0.

The BV-SSPA has also encouraged them to participate at national and international congresses and conferences such as the National Congress on Health Scientific Documentation held in Spain every two years:

- 2005 in Tarrasa.
- 2007 in Zaragoza
- 2009 in Oviedo
- 2011 in Cádiz
- 2014 in Madrid.

The librarians of the Andalusian Health System attended the conferences and gave presentations. The results of the training in new skills required by the BV-SSPA and the team work of the librarians were presented at these congresses.

In 2007 in Zaragoza these were the subject of the six oral presentations:

- Marketing and Cibermarketing at the Virtual Library.
- Quality standard definition for the Digital Library network.
- Information source evaluation for clinical decisions.
- The e-Knowledge management.
The Impact of the Digital Library at local hospitals.
- Interlibrary loan at the Digital Library.

In 2009, at the Congress in Oviedo these were the presentations given by the Andalusian librarians:
- Viability study of the creation of a National Digital Library of Health.
- New website of the BV-SSPA.
- Strategic communication plan at the BV-SSPA.
- User feedback: proposal for collection their expectations and online visibility.
- Design of strategic thematic subjects.
- Cultural change: from local interlibrary loan to global one.
- Usage statistics.
- New space designs.
- Licensing at the BV-SSPA.
- Driver guidelines.
- Authentication for remote access.

In 2011 the BV-SSPA was in charge of organizing the National Congress on Health Documentation, and every librarian in the Health System participated through the local committee. In addition, these two presentations were given:

- Impactia: automating the analysis, description and monitoring of the scientific production.
- Cloud computing: A new strategy for the implementation and customization of DSpace.

There were also librarians from the Andalusian Health System attending the conferences of the European Association of Health Information and Libraries at Helsinki in 2008, Lisbon in 2010 and Brussels in 2012, and these were the presentations:

- Hypatiasalud, institutional repository for the Andalusian Health System.
- Digital immigrants and digital natives expectation collection in the Andalusian public health system virtual library.
- Towards the integration of MetaLib, SFX and PAPI: how to change your metasearcher transparently to the user.
- The Andalusian Public Health System virtual library: four years on.

In 2008 the BV-SSPA organized the 2nd European National Digital Libraries of Health Conference where the professionals of the health system had the chance to exchange their expertise with other European colleagues who worked at Digital Libraries of Health.

All these events gave the opportunity to our librarians to update their knowledge and expertise, and reinforce the library network at the Andalusian Health System. Besides that, every year the BV-SSPA organized the Andalusian Health System library meeting where the
proper training in tools and applications developed by the Digital Library were provided and where the librarians shared their work and discussed their problems of everyday work.

In all of them the head office of the Digital Library prepared the sessions based on the tools, projects and applications which are developed at the BV-SSPA: Web 2.0, Social Network, InterLibrary loan centralized platform, institutional repository, scientific production study application, subject areas, meta-searcher, available scientific resources, policies of the Health System concerning the library, etc. The target of these sessions is to reinforce the librarian network and standardize the tasks of the librarians in the Health System.

An example of interaction and exchange of expertise was the last workshop held in Sevilla last October 2013. With the endorsement of the EAHIL, the BV-SSPA organized a work session of two days for the librarians of the Andalusian Health System based on the subjects and techniques of the previous workshop of the EAHIL held in Stockholm in June 2013.

With regard to the standardization of the work of the librarians in the Andalusian Health System, in 2011 the BV-SSPA provided all the centers with the proper equipment to achieve the most efficient use of the tools which are now available. The BV-SSPA made an important investment in technological equipment, and acquired personal computers, screens, scanners and other devices which were directly delivered to the librarians at their work centers. The end user feedback which is obtained allows the BV-SSPA to adapt its services to the real needs of health professionals.

During these eight years, the BV-SSPA has become a trademark in the Health System due to the dissemination process carried out by the librarians:

The library has been presented in every institution of the system. In this presentation, the director of the BV-SSPA explains the resources, services and tools which are available to the end users. This way the use of the library is promoted and doubts or questions can be solved.

In this sense this dissemination work has been expanded thanks to the work the librarians do at their centers. The BV-SSPA has a marketing department in charge of organizing training courses aimed at helping health professionals acquire the necessary skills to maximize efficient performance of the library. These courses are offered by the librarians in their respective centers according to the previous detected needs.

The following table shows the number of courses, workshops and bibliographic clinical sessions which took place at the Andalusian Health centers:
Figure 1 BV-SSPA Courses, workshops and bibliographic clinical sessions in the Andalusian Health System.

The trademark of the BV-SSPA has also changed the physical spaces allocated to the library within the organizations. The library print journals have been efficiently decreased and the resulting space can be used to study or discussion rooms, as this photograph shows:
results

The Andalusian eHealth Library coordinates a team of 42 librarians who work throughout the whole Andalusian territory, and are in charge of their own library at every center.

They are also organized in several working groups such as:

- Inter-Library Loan
- Thematic Areas
- Scientific Production Studies
- Information Technologies
- Institutional Repository
- Social Networks
- Science Web Page
- Citizen Web Page
- Copyright and Intellectual Property
- Statistics
- Scientific Resource Contracting

Additionally, there is a central team who manage the Library and the work of these librarians, composed of:
As a coordinator of work of the librarians, every year the BV-SSPA establishes some general targets to be fulfilled by the librarians. In 2013 these were the general targets:

- User Training and dissemination of the use of the BV-SSPA
- User service and troubleshooting
- Document supply to the interlibrary loan
- Scientific Production Collection
- Participation in the Institutional Repository
- Participation in the communication plan

The librarians of the Health System have been evaluated according to the fulfillment of these objectives, as a part of the library network. In addition, there are other specific tasks some of them are directly involved in:

- Interlibrary loan service which is carried out by the librarians from the hospitals of Almeria, Cádiz and Granada.
- Thematic subjects which have been developed and kept by librarians from Cordoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaen, Malaga and Seville.
- Administration of the institutional repository held by librarians from Granada, Malaga and Seville.
- Development and maintenance of the meta-searcher and link resolver, responsibility of the librarian from Huelva.
- Development and maintenance of the application for scientific production analysis, carried out by Seville.
- Coordination of the Marketing and dissemination department which is the responsibility of the person in charge of the Hospital Library in Jaen.

Conclusions

During these eight years of operation, the versatility and the adaptability of librarians has been demonstrated. They moved from being reactive to being proactive and switched to being the research engine of our Health System\(^6\).

They had to face a real challenge with meant a cultural change in terms of new roles, new tasks and new skills. The BV-SSPA allowed user self-service, the centralization of resource purchasing and service offers, and although they could have regarded it as a threat they adapted to their new situation and together they made this project come true.

The success of this project has been widely demonstrated and recognized as a European Best Practice by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), and also awarded the Cross-Administrative Project Honourable Mention.
According to the evaluation done by EIPA, the involvement of all the stakeholders associated are the basis of the cross-administrative thinking and partnership working, as it says, *the dissemination of the project among stakeholders was also planned in its communication strategy, which foresaw a training strategy in order to maximize the access to the e-Library resources.*

As we always said this project came true thanks not only to government commitment but also to professional commitment.

References:


