University Libraries – between Service Providers and Research Institutions

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Abstract

In the last years the process of generating, disseminating, and archiving new knowledge has changed fundamentally. Beside the increasing amount of new knowledge that needs to be processed, new paradigms for search, access, and exchange have evolved: digital information is discovered, interlinked with curated databases, commented upon, adapted, and shared in Web-based collaborative research infrastructures. And this does not only concern classic scientific publications in monographs, journals, or conference proceedings, but also data in the form of models and simulations, experimental data sets or results of analyses. This new way of creating knowledge is often referred to as e-Science (enhanced science), and heavily relies on modern Web information management and Web 2.0 technologies.

In order to reflect these changes university libraries as dedicated infrastructure provider for the management of scientific research information need to get active: besides handling the exponentially growing amount of rather heterogeneous material (the information deluge) users need customizable and personalizable digital tools and value-added services to support the effective and efficient utilization of information resources. This need has also been recognized by prominent funding agencies like the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), which recently phased out one of its oldest grant programs for libraries, the system of Special Subject Collections, and introduced a new funding line called Scientific Information Services. But the key to providing a solid foundation for all such services obviously lies in the comprehensive and qualitatively sound indexing of the textual and non-textual resources, which, however, usually needs manual efforts and thus is hard to provide on today’s limited budgets. In this keynotes we will take a closer look at the current change in libraries and the research challenges to develop advanced methods for information provisioning. We argue that this research needs to become an integral part of modern library structures and will be strongly interdisciplinary in nature.

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