Kanvassing change in the academic library: a prototype application for capturing and enhancing organizational knowledge

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The more HE today advances towards the development of a metaframe that grounds its remit and function in the heutagogical, post-positivist and constructivist theories, the more academic library administrative and executive staff become aware of the necessity to reevaluate and upgrade their position on the accountability discussion table.

As their first step to demonstrating their value and contribution to student progress, they are starting to rethink and redesign their data collection practices, especially the ones associated with the collection and capitalization of student-generated data during interaction with library material, spaces, services and equipment.

Within this realm, librarians are beginning to develop and test a variety of design science artifacts, namely methodologies and apps, that serve the purpose of capturing student creative workflows within library walls, that underrepresented, undervalued and underestimated form of intellectual capital without which strategic planning risks losing its focus and effectiveness.

A series of library stakeholder interviews in 2016 around library data potential connection with campus learning analytics initiatives and LIS student and expert surveys in 2018 provided the baseline set of user requirements that helped shape CLIC Library App. Instead of being one more addition to the institutional analytics bandwagon, library use data is placed at the core of a comprehensive platform, a one-stop library hub, combining a variety of functionalities and bridging & bonding effects...

Once developed the initial low-fidelity prototype, two groups of LIS students, 13 undergraduates and 17 postgraduates, at the Department of Archival, Library and Information Studies, University of West Attica, Athens Greece, were given the opportunity in December 2018 to pilot test and evaluate it in their triple capacity of university students, library users and new information professionals.

Participants’ response to both CLIC Library App usability and usefulness aspects was overall positive. Their rich textured comments as recorded in the post-test survey are an excellent indication of how positively new information professionals perceive their decisive role in the newly emerging academic commons and how eager they could be to codeveloping and adopting tailor-made home-grown artifacts that could balance privacy with collaboration and co-creation opportunities.

Findings also uphold our design decision to adopt a more library oriented approach with social, self-scaffolding and participatory aspects to serving both institutional goals and the library mission.

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to all research participants for their help and valuable contributions in developing and evaluating CLIC Library App and also to the University of West Attica College Libraries’ Faculty for their valuable support at all stages of this project.


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