



T.E.I. of Piraeus

eR A – 5 Proceedings

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**The contribution
of Information Technology
to Science, Economy, Society and Education**

.....

**T.E.I. of PIRAEUS
2011**

eRA-5

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Π. Ράιιε θαη Θεβώλ 250
122 44 Αιγγάιεσ
Σει.: 210 5381200

ISSN – 1791 – 1133

Editorial

The “eRA-5” Proceedings reflect the innovation procedure that has been undertaken by universities, research centers, enterprises and researchers in the field of Information Technology. The results of this procedure have been presented in the “eRA-5” International Scientific Conference at T.E.I. of Piraeus, Greece, during 15 - 18 September 2010. This volume contains 76 papers, for the contribution of Information Technology to Science, Economy, Society and Education and for the International synergy in Energy, Environment and Tourism. The papers have been reviewed by members of the Scientific Committee of the Conference and all needed revisions have been requested.

We think that the most of primary aims of the Conference have been satisfied. This fact leads the way to the “eRA-6” International Conference at Piraeus on 21 – 24 September 2011. We hope that this fourth conference will be of higher quality than the previous one and contribute in innovation and improvement in a wider context and to the improvement of international collaboration in the above fields.

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Contents

1. V. Stergiopoulos, A. Stergiopoulou, E. Kalkani, "A brief Archimedean history: From ancient spiral screws to modern Archimedean hydropower energy tools" ... p. 10 – 15
2. V. Stergiopoulos, A. Stergiopoulou, P. Leventis, "A letter from Mother Nature - walking on water: From the water-walkers hydrodynamics to the nanotechnology" ... p. 16 – 21
3. V. Ciprin Biris, A. Argeseanu, D. Boian, "A New Ferrofluid Actuator Using the Passive – Levitation Effect" ... p. 22 – 29
4. A. Argeseanu, I. Torac, "About a hydro pumped storage solution" ... p. 30 – 36
5. I. Papoutsis, D. Tseles, "An Information Management System Capable to Support SLAs" ... p. 37 – 47
6. Ch. Cabouris, N. Cabouris, C. Vatavalis, "Automatic Air-Traffic Coordination & Collision Avoidance Systems. Three Dimensional design platforms produce efficient trajectories" ... p. 48 – 78
7. D. Boian, A. Argeseanu, V. Ciprin Biris, "Automotive PMSG with DC – DC Buck – Boost Converter" ... p. 79 – 84
8. C. Medrea, G. Negrea, A. Katsapi, A. Marousaki, "Calculation of the activation energy required for recrystallisation of warm-rolled carbon steel as a function of the imposed hardness" ... p. 85 – 91
9. E. A. Man, "Cascade Adjustment of the Speed of a DC Motor Using the Kessler Variant" ... p. 92 – 98
10. T. Natsiopoulou, M. Bletsou, "Characteristics of the use of a home computer by preschool children in Greece" ... p. 99 – 104
11. N. A. Georgieva, "Combined tool for shaving and surface plastic deformation" ... p. 105 – 109
12. T. Dordea, I. Torac, C. Madescu, V. Proca, "Consideration about the Roebel bar model validation" ... p. 110 – 114
13. K. Tatsi, E. Seralidou, "Creation of an educational virtual environment that simulates the function of the protocol TCP/IP" ... p. 115 – 123
14. T. Moraiti, E. Panadimitrou, "Design and Development of Educational Software for the First Grade of Primary school with the software Demo Builder: "Something's going on!" ... p. 124 – 130
15. D. N. Kallergis, I.E. Foukarakis, G. N. Prezerakos, "Design issues for distributed mobile social networks" ... p. 131 – 137
16. L. O. Angels, G. J. Besseris, "Design of experiment – development of waterborne enamel based on modified alkyd emulsions" ... p. 138 – 144
17. N. Simos, D. Tseles, "Design of Project Collaborative Writing System. A Web Application" ... p. 145 – 165
18. N. Cabouris, C. Cabouris, "Diagonalisation as a Method of Proof. A conceptual approach towards usage and restrictions" ... p. 166 – 181
19. S. Harlock, Z. Stjepanović, J. Davis, M. Blaga, A. Peppas, G. Priniotakis, F. Nunes Ferreira, A. Vilumsone, I. Ziemeles, M. Debevc, "Distance learning and Web-Based education and training for textile studies : The eLiTA Project" ... p. 182 – 196
20. P. Gounari, G. Grollios, "Distance Learning in Teacher Education: A Critical Review" ... p. 197 – 205
21. K. Nikolopoulou, "Education in the era of digital technology: prospects, challenges and concerns" ... p. 206 – 211

22. K. Argyris, E. Tsalera, A. Doumouras, M. Christopoulou, "Educational model for experimental set-up implementation for measurements of liquid level using capacitive sensor" ... p. 212 - 217
23. G. Alexandratos, A. Mantzaridou, "Educational Technology as a Teaching and Learning Medium of Environmental Education" ... p. 218 - 224
24. N. Chronas-Foteinakis, T. Papandrianos, G. Nikolaou, K. Alafodimos, "Experimental setup for quad copters" ... p. 225 - 230
25. I. Tsiplakides, I. Fragoulis, A. Keramida, "Implementing project work with the use of the Internet in the English language classroom" ... p. 231 - 236
26. D. Tsiotas, M. Vafopoulos, "Mathematic Significances as Diectic Transformations of the Web Science" ... p. 237 - 250
27. D. Statharas, D. Papageorgiou, J. Sideris, C. Medrea, "Microscopic examination of a failed cutting tool's fracture surfaces" ... p. 251 - 257
28. I. Peppas, S. Vassiliadis, D. Domvoglou, A. Peppas, "Modeling of Textile Fabrics and e-Learning" ... p. 258 - 264
29. B. Meparishvili, "New Approach to Evolutionary Algorithms" ... p. 265 - 273
30. S. M. Iancu, A. Argeşeanu, R. Ghiorghe, "Non-invasive smart integrated automation for human health monitoring in a residential passive building" ... p. 274 - 280
31. P. Kervalishvili, M. Khachidze, M. Skhirtladze, P. Tatishvili, G. Tukhashvili, P. Yannakopoulos, "Novel approaches to quantum information science: Some methods and views" ... p. 281 - 296
32. T. Khvedelidze, "On One Design of a Finite Automaton" ... p. 297 - 304
33. R. Ghiorghe, A. Argeşeanu, S. Iancu, "Optimal Structure for Dual Axis Solar Tracking System" ... p. 305 - 311
34. V. Renold, N. Zagoras, G. Besseris, "Project Management Maturity Model EL0T1429: An application methodology" ... p. 312 - 318
35. K. Karamanolis, G. Besseris, K. Stergiou, "Reliability analysis of Aluminium Coating Machines" ... p. 319 - 331
36. Ch. Komnits, K. Karamanolis, G. J. Besseris, C. Stergiou, "Reliability analysis of Aluminium Coating Machines" ... p. 332 - 342
37. A. S. Rizopoulos, D. V. Kallergis, G. M. Prezerakos, "Security Evaluation for Mail Distribution Systems" ... p. 343 - 349
38. N. Theodoris, Th. Krikeris, Y. Giassos, "Service System for Sport Tourism customers in Hotel Enterprises and Quality: From theory to practice" ... p. 350 - 358
39. K. Katsiamba, D. Marines, C. Aidinis, E. Tsilis, G.S. Tombras, H.E. Nistazakis, "Simulation Model for Indoor Wireless Optical Communications Channels" ... p. 359 - 364
40. K. Antonakoglou, K. Andriotis, P. Papageorgas, D. Pyromalis, D. Tseles, "Smart Solar Panels: in situ monitoring and testing of photovoltaic panels based on wireless sensor networks" ... p. 365 - 376
41. A. Usoro, X. Zheng, G. Majewski, M. Niu, "Suitability of the personal credit rating based on logistic regression models in China: a conceptual view" ... p. 377 - 387
42. A. Kapravelou, "Technology in relation to economy, work, society, and education: a critical review" ... p. 388 - 396
43. Chr. Melissa-Halikiopoulou, T. Natsiopoulou, F. Obessi, "Television viewing and home computer use: Patterns in Greek preschoolers. Legal status and paedagogical suggestions" ... p. 397 - 402
44. J. Makris, Ch. Cabouris, C. Vatavalis, "The application of Kinetic Sculpture in Buildings. Mobilizing fixed assets" ... p. 403 - 416

45. A. Kapaniaris, K. Vainas, E. Papadimitriou, G. Valatsou, "The electronic book (e-book) as a tool of problem centred teaching" ... p. 417 – 423
46. G. Vassilopoulos, "The process and the Key Decision Factors (KDF) of strategic projects implementation route selection" ... p. 424 – 431
47. Z. Kazlacheva, "The use of Suitable Methods of Statistical Analysis in Fashion Design and Clothing Constructing" ... p. 432 – 437
48. E. Theodotou, "Using computers in early years education: What are the effects on children's development? Some suggestions concerning beneficial computer practice" ... p. 438 – 442
49. V. Renold, N. Zagoras, G. Besseris, "VIRTUAL TEAMS: Key factors for managerial competency" ... p. 443 – 450
50. E. Garoufallou, S. Asderi, D. Koutsomiha, "Digital libraries as knowledge management systems" ... p. 451 – 457
51. M. Laiho, T. Lessner, M. Kurki, K. Silpiö, "On the Isolation Property of ACID Transactions" ... p. 458 – 464
52. E. Galiotou, A. Kesidis, B. Gatos, I. Pratikakis, "Using NLP techniques in historical document processing" ... p. 465 – 472
53. N. N. Karanikolas, M. Gr. Vassilakopoulos, "Database Design with Real-World Structures" ... p. 473 – 486
54. N. Kouiroukidis, G. Evangelidis, "Efficient Indexing Methods in the Data Mining Context" ... p. 487 – 494
55. E. Outsios, G. Evangelidis, "Achieving optimal average data node storage utilization in k-dimensional point data indexes" ... p. 495 – 502
56. K. Fragos, "Automatic Greek Text Document Classification Using Machine Learning Techniques" ... p. 503 – 507
57. D. P. Sakas, M. C. Terzi, G. Giannakopoulos, "Strategic Communication by Dynamic Simulation Model for Event Management" ... p. 508 – 528
58. D. Vassis, P. Belsis, C. Skourlas, "A Wireless Framework for Secure Execution of Exams Related to Students with Special Needs" ... p. 529 – 539
59. C. Marinogi, F. Sarinopolou, C. Skourlas, "A learning system for the adaptive evaluation of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students" ... p. 540 – 545
60. R. Siafaka, N. N. Karanikolas, "Improvements in the Name-Your-Price Dynamic Pricing Model" ... p. 546 – 552
61. A. Vozikis, J. E. Goulonis, S. Miovolos, "Clinical Decision Support Systems based on Markov Decision Processes" ... p. 553 – 557
62. C. Papageorgiou, I. Samanta, P. Kyriazopoulos, "Electronic word of mouth (e-wom) the case of internet forums" ... p. 558 – 576
63. E. Zotos, I. Samanta, "Applying Measurement Tools to Improve Store Image and Performance. The case of an apparel retail store" ... p. 577 – 588
64. V. Patrinos, P. Kyriazopoulos, I. Samanta, "The Role of Motives and the Way that the Theories of Motivation can be Used to Predict and Guide Consumer Behavior: the Case of HSBC in Greece" ... p. 589 – 615
65. E. Tsiora, P. Kyriazopoulos, I. Samanta, "Consumers' Perceptions for price vs quality service. The abroad flights of Aegean Airlines Company" ... p. 616 – 630
66. A. Kavalaris, I. Samanta, "Factors affecting the consumers in buying a new car during the period of economic crisis" ... p. 631 – 642
67. K. N. Spentzas, "Information technology in education at Vehicles Laboratory of the National Technical University of Athens" ... p. 643 – 648
68. A. T. Mircea, "Energy Efficiency Measures – Increasing the Energetic Performance of the Residential Building Sector" ... p. 649 – 653

69. P. Gazis, G. A. Vokas, St. Papathanasiou, "Trends of power electronics on renewable energy systems" ... p. 654 – 663
70. K. Agavanakis, G. Panagakis, G. Flamis, S. Koutroubinas, "On porting a fuzzy logic library to embedded systems. Development of Computational Intelligence Methods for the rehabilitation control system of the lower limbs" ... p. 664 – 679
71. K. Karafasoulis, K. Zachariadou, S. Seferlis, I. Kaissas, C. Lambropoulos, D. Loukas, C. Poritiriadis, "Simulated performance of a position sensitive radiation detecting system (COCAE)" ... p. 680 – 688
72. A. Tzerachoglou, G. Priniotakis, I. Chronis, E. Kapsalis, A. Pappas, E. Gyalinou, D. Piromalis, D. Tseles, L. Karamparpas, "Development of conductive threads using experimental laboratory device" ... p. 689 – 695
73. A. Sari, D. Piromali, D. Tseles, N. Vasilakis, I. Zisis, A. Charitopoulos, M. Monovasiou, "WebZi – An embedded Web Server and ZigBee to TCP/IP Gateway system" ... p. 696 – 703
74. D. Piromalis, I. Chatziioannou, A. Sari, C. Drosos, D. Tseles, E. Kapsalis, "Fleet management by using wireless sensor network technology through Zigbee wireless standard" ... p. 704 – 712
75. P. Kofinas, P. Fetfatzis, H. Tzafa, S. Fouskas, M. Foudoulaki, K. Alarodimos, "PV power system for application in robotics" ... p. 713 – 720
76. A. Kokkosis, S. Tsitomeneas, A. Charitopoulos, "Future Management Trends" ... p. 721 – 728

50 Digital libraries as knowledge management systems

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of two questionnaire instruments, one for knowledge sharing attitudes among librarians and one focused on digital libraries as knowledge management systems. The results derived from surveys undertaken in four European countries, indicate a positive attitude of librarians towards accepting digital libraries as knowledge management systems. Librarians also exhibit stronger intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation to share knowledge in the workplace.

50.1 Introduction

Electronic content explosion has become a force of change for traditional library practices and it —has challenged the status of the library as the only provider of information (Sarrafzadeh, Martin & Hazeri 2010, p. 198). The advancement of digital technologies expanded libraries from physical brick and mortar entities to libraries without walls. Marchionini, Plaisant and Kuhlodi (2003, p.123) consider DL as the logical extension and augmentations of physical libraries in the electronic information society.

In an effort to provide their patrons with a broad array of electronic resources libraries are increasingly seeking ways to integrate digital collections, which alongside with traditional print collections offer a comprehensive knowledge source base for research, learning and instruction.

The term digital libraries encompasses a wide range of working systems and research prototypes, collections of information and documents, and technologies (Van House, Bishop, and Battenfield 2003, p.1) and thus extends its scope in several directions. From the community of library and information science viewpoint the Digital Library Federation (DLF) states that —Digital Libraries are organizations that provide the resources, including the specialized staff, to select, structure, offer intellectual access to, interpret, distribute, preserve the integrity of, and ensure the persistence over time of collections of digital works so that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities“.

According to experts KM is holding the —core position in Digital Libraries (Shuchun nd) and though DL cover the needs of contemporary users they are —not so efficient without effective Knowledge management (Shuchun nd). Rydberg-Cox, et al. (2000), equate KM to —the new document delivery and knowledge management tools in a digital library while Infield (1997) poses that KM is —the biggest thing to hit the information profession since the internet. Ponzi identified the top 10 interdisciplinary influences of KM in rank order with the library and information science holding the fourth position (in Wallace 2007, p.5).

According to Dillon the definition and viewpoints on KM are so many that it —makes a consolidated understanding of the core concept difficult and that none of the definitions is fully satisfactoryll (in Wallace 2007, p.3). The Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science defines KM as —a management practice that uses an organization's intellectual capital to achieve its organizational missionll (Clair 2003, p. 1486).

KM originated in the business sector in the beginning of the 1990's with a goal to -make full use of the knowledge existed in a corporation to increase the productivity and/or operational efficiency so as to build an edge in the competitionll (Wien 2005). Research by Roknuzzaman, Kanai and Umemoto (2009, pp. 379-380) has shown significant overlaps between DL and KM. They hold the same *objective* of providing users with access to knowledge resources. Data, information and knowledge are the *main content* resources they provide. *People* are the key actors in the organizational processes and the main users of information and/or knowledge systems. Both KM and DL follow the same *process* of acquisition, processing, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information and/or knowledge for its proper utilization. Finally, the use of *technology* tools and techniques such as indexing, taxonomies, codification, metadata, data mining, database management, knowledge mapping techniques, etc. are being used for the management of contents and their retrieval.

Organizations which employ KM values develop a knowledge – based culture, promotion of knowledge sharing, innovations in DL services and a strong leadership position for Digital Libraries (Roknuzzaman, Kanai, Umemoto 2009, p. 372). Cultivating a knowledge sharing culture is difficult and it is primarily a principle fostered by the organization. A concern in organizational knowledge sharing as expressed by Ghosh and Jambekar (2003, p.9) is that people —might not be willing to share negative experiences and lessons learned based on failure because of their negative connotationll but llthese problems can be overcome with the effective utilisation of traditional resources (manpower, materials and money) as well as information and knowledge resourcesll. It was also evident from previous research that -library staff acknowledges that the new digital working environment affects the way in which they share knowledge and recognize the importance of the role of intrinsic motivation in knowledge sharingll (Garoutallou et al. 2009).

50.2 Aims and Objectives

This research paper investigates the results of two surveys. The first survey examines whether the establishment of knowledge distribution mechanisms or sharing environments is a familiar territory for librarians. Librarians traditionally created knowledge distribution systems for their users. The question is do they share knowledge between themselves? How librarian's knowledge sharing values as well as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are influenced by the shifting IT environment?

The second survey investigates the hypothesis of whether DL are considered as KM systems. The objectives are focused on recording how familiar are librarians with the developing KM and sharing concepts and how those concepts are interrelated and connected with digital libraries. The survey also outlines the various positions of librarians on the elements of KM systems which contribute to the successfulness of digital libraries.

50.3 Methodology

The paper presents the results of two online surveys distributed in 2010 by Deltos Research Group (<http://www.deltos.org>). The surveys were carried out in four European

countries: Greece, Czech Republic, Malta and Cyprus. The first survey was on knowledge sharing attitudes among librarians and the second focused on DL as KM systems. Both of the instruments incorporated items following a seven point semantic referential scale, and it was circulated via e-mail. The analysis included comparisons on the mean values of all variables, examining each country's participants' perceptions on both topics. Furthermore, a set of Spearman's tests were also performed for checking any correlations between the factors that motivate knowledge sharing attitudes on the one hand, and on the other those factors that influence the effectiveness and efficiency of digital libraries as KM systems. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS.

50.4 Results

The total number of respondents in the survey on DL as KM systems was one hundred twenty nine (129). Most respondents, forty eight, were from Greece, thirty eight from Cyprus, twenty five from Malta and eighteen from the Czech Republic. The following table provides the mean percentages to the questions. On a scale of one to seven opinions reflect positive or favourable opinions on whether DL can be used as KM systems and what elements are considered as more important in a DL. The results revealed that the majority of the participants were neither positive nor negative on their opinion of whether DL can be considered as KM systems. It could be estimated that in these 4 countries DL are still under development and possibly their application is yet measured as repositories and not in correlation to KM systems.

At the question of -What elements should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital libraryll the results showed that crucial factors considered are —technology supportll with total sum of positive answers (5-slightly agree to 7-strongly agree) 94.7%, followed by —rich metadata descriptionll (86.8%), —understanding user needsll (83.7%) and —good knowledge of subjectll (79.1%). The factor —Strategic plan establishmentll and the designing of a DL collected distributed opinions varying from slightly disagree to slightly agree. A guessmate of the first two high percentages can be that the libraries in these four countries are still struggling with succeeding negotiations with IT departments for getting the necessary DL technological support and with acquiring an adequate number of staff for working specifically on enriching the metadata description of the DL records.

Digital Libraries as KM Systems	Percentages						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do you think that digital libraries can be used as Knowledge Management Systems?	0%	0%	0.8%	33.3%	11.6%	31.8%	22.5%
Do you think that digital libraries have affected the way people store their knowledge in workplace?	0%	0.8%	21.7%	50.4%	14.7%	7.0%	4.7%
Do you think that designing of a digital library affects the way knowledge is shared?	0%	0%	20.9%	17.8%	31.0%	20.9%	9.3%
What elements should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital library? Understanding User needs	0%	0%	5.4%	10.9%	24.8%	24.8%	34.1%
What elements should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital library? Good knowledge of subject	0%	0%	10.9%	10.1%	18.6%	34.9%	25.6%
What elements should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital library? Rich metadata description	0.8%	0%	7.8%	4.7%	35.7%	11.6%	39.5%
What elements should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital library? Strategic plan establishment	0.8%	10.9%	10.9%	22.5%	23.3%	19.4%	7.8%

What elements should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital library? Technology support	0%	0%	0.8%	0%	26.4%	35.7%	94.7%
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Table 1: *Digital Libraries as Knowledge Management Systems*

The Spearman's correlation test was performed in order to see any positive correlations between the variables. The purpose of selecting Spearman's correlations was due to the fact that the data was not normally distributed. The results showed that the effect of the design of a DL in the way people share their knowledge was positively correlated with two elements that should be considered in creating an effective KM system within a digital library. These were —understanding user needs $_{ll}$ ($r_s=0.526$, $N=129$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed) and —rich metadata description $_{ll}$ ($r_s=0.715$, $N=129$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed). Also, —good knowledge of subject $_{ll}$ was positively correlated with —strategic plan establishment $_{ll}$ ($r_s=0.561$, $N=123$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed) and —understanding user needs $_{ll}$ ($r_s=0.570$, $N=129$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed).

The second survey was conducted to determine the knowledge sharing attitudes among librarians. A total of 145 participated from the same countries as in the previous survey. Sixteen respondents were from Malta, seven from the Czech Republic, three from Cyprus and one hundred and nineteen from Greece. The majority were female ($n=113$), thirty one were male and one missing. Thirty two of work in academic libraries, nine in college libraries, three in school libraries and two in special libraries. Most of the respondents were students ($n=51$) followed by twenty six librarians, nine library assistants, ten library administrators, and one archivist.

Table 2 shows the mean percentages of all the questions. From the four statements provided at the questionnaire the mean percentage of the question —When a colleague asks me for help or assistance, I share what knowledge I may have on the subject $_{ll}$ collected the highest score (75.2%) at a scale of one to seven (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). The statement that followed was —When I encounter a work related problem, I seek knowledge and help from my colleagues $_{ll}$ with 51%. Consequently, we could estimate that librarians are eager to provide their knowledge to and facilitate their colleagues and also willing to request their colleagues' assistance when they need it.

The responses to the four statements are motivated by several intrinsic and extrinsic factors. From the intrinsic factors, sharing knowledge is an important value for the 55.9% of the participants, and an important part of their job for the 47.6%. They like to work as a team with other colleagues (40.7%) and equally share knowledge for the pleasure of discovering new insights (40, 7%). On the other hand, the percentages of the extrinsic factors as they were formed showed clearly that librarians where actually motivated to share their knowledge by intrinsic factors. Specifically, librarians responded negatively on being motivated by to the extrinsic factors of —I share knowledge because it may help me get a salary increase $_{ll}$ (29%), —I share knowledge because I want my manager to praise me $_{ll}$ (23.4%), —I share knowledge because It may help me get promoted $_{ll}$ (22.1%), and —I share knowledge because I want my colleagues to praise me $_{ll}$ (21.4%). At the last extrinsic factor —I share knowledge because it is important for the evaluation of my job performance $_{ll}$ the views seem to diverge. Most of the participants though seem to agree with the factor in a total sum of 59.3% (5-7).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I have knowledge that might be relevant for others in the library, I do what I can to make it available to them.	0%	1.4%	3.4%	7.6%	15.2%	21.4%	50.3%

When a colleague asks me for help or assistance, I share what knowledge I may have on the subject	0.7%	0%	2.1%	2.1%	4.8%	14.5%	75.2%
I stay updated by exploring the information I can find on the different knowledge systems and databases	1.4%	1.4%	4.1%	10.3%	22.8%	25.5%	33.1%
When I encounter a work related problem, I seek knowledge and help from my colleagues	0.7%	0.7%	2.8%	6.9%	17.9%	19.3%	51.0%
Factors of intrinsic motivation							
I share knowledge because is an important value for me	0%	0.7%	0.7%	4.8%	17.9%	22.8%	55.9%
I share knowledge because I want to find out whether my ideas are relevant	0.7%	4.8%	4.8%	12.4%	29.7%	2.8%	20.7%
I share knowledge because I think it is an important part of my job	0.7%	2.1%	1.4%	10.3%	10.3%	17.9%	56.6%
I share knowledge because I enjoy doing so	1.4%	2.8%	4.1%	11.0%	20.7%	26.2%	33.1%
I share knowledge because it fulfils my personality	0%	1.4%	3.4%	12.4%	17.9%	16.6%	22.8%
I share knowledge because the senior management does so	10.3%	11.7%	13.1%	22.1%	17.2%	9.0%	5.9%
I share knowledge because I trust my colleagues	3.4%	3.4%	7.6%	14.5%	23.4%	24.8%	27.2%
I share knowledge because I am working as a team with other colleagues	2.1%	0.7%	4.8%	10.3%	14.5%	24.8%	40.7%
I share knowledge because sharing is safe and confidential	2.1%	3.4%	4.1%	17.9%	16.6%	12.4%	13.1%
I share knowledge for the pleasure of discovering new insights	0%	0.7%	4.1%	6.9%	14.5%	27.6%	40.7%
I share knowledge because I can use knowledge from others which is provided to me just in time	0%	0.7%	2.1%	10.3%	15.2%	35.9%	29.7%
I share knowledge because I can use knowledge of value from other colleagues	0%	0.7%	3.4%	8.3%	18.6%	30.3%	33.1%
I share knowledge because it is easy to do so	0%	10.3%	16.6%	15.9%	19.3%	17.2%	9.7%
Factors of extrinsic motivation							
I share knowledge because It may help me get promoted	22.8%	15.2%	14.5%	17.2%	11.7%	9.0%	4.8%
I share knowledge because I want my manager to praise me	23.4%	20.0%	9.0%	20.0%	13.1%	6.9%	2.8%
I share knowledge because I want my colleagues to praise me	21.4%	17.9%	11.7%	20.0%	13.8%	6.9%	2.8%
I share knowledge because it may help me get a salary increase	29.0%	10.3%	9.7%	18.6%	13.8%	6.2%	6.9%
I share knowledge because it is important for the evaluation of my job performance	11.0%	2.8%	5.5%	15.2%	16.6%	24.8%	17.9%

Table 2: Attitudes towards knowledge sharing

A set of Spearman's tests were also performed in order to examine possible correlations between the variables. It was found that the participants tended to share their knowledge when it was needed because —giving knowledge was important to themll ($r_s=0.526$, $N=170$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed). From the results also appeared that in the sharing knowledge attitude of librarians some intrinsic factors where strongly correlated to each other. More specifically, the intrinsic factor —I share knowledge because I like itll was strongly correlated to —I share knowledge because it is an important part of my workll ($r_s=0.640$, $N=167$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed) and to —I share knowledge because it fulfils my personalityll ($r_s=0.772$, $N=133$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed).

Although, as it is aforementioned the participants were motivated by intrinsic factors for sharing knowledge with their colleagues, some correlations were interesting between the intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Specifically, the intrinsic factor —I share knowledge because I want to find out whether my ideas are relevantll was positively correlated to

the extrinsic factor —I share knowledge because it may help me get promoted ($r_s=0.383$, $N=136$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed). Also, the intrinsic factor —I share knowledge because the senior management does so is positively correlated to the extrinsic factor —I share knowledge because it may help me get a salary increase ($r_s=0.480$, $N=133$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed). The intrinsic factor —I share knowledge because it is easy to do so was correlated to the extrinsic factor —I share knowledge because I want my colleagues to praise me ($r_s=0.246$, $N=137$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed) and the intrinsic factor —I share knowledge because sharing is safe and confidential was correlated to the extrinsic factor —I share knowledge because it is important for the evaluation of my job performance ($r_s=0.301$, $N=103$, $p<0.01$, two-tailed).

50.5 Conclusions

Librarians have been in the forefront of sharing knowledge and creating knowledge distribution systems for their users. The results of the survey indicate that they have a stronger intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation to share knowledge even though these factors are correlated to each other. Knowledge sharing is an inherent value in the field of Library and Information services and it was evident from the results that they consider it an important value as part of their job.

The results indicate that librarians accept digital libraries as knowledge management and sharing systems with opinions being distributed towards a positive attitude. Knowledge management and systems is a rather new concept for librarians and as digital libraries develop it will take time and effort to fully acknowledge and incorporate them as a vital element. Lack of technology support and tools are the crucial factors for librarians in order to implement an effective KM system. These are connected with skills acquisition which will keep librarians up to date and become more appreciative of the value of knowledge management systems in libraries.

50.6 References

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