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University Libraries as a Gateway to E-Learning

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LIBRARY

*Encyclopedia Britannica Online*

Traditionally, collection of books used for reading or study, or the building or room in which such a collection is kept.

*Britannica Student Encyclopedia*

A library is more than a place, more than books and films and records. Basically a library is a gathering of ideas, of information — put in order and shared.
Rapid developments in computers, telecommunications, and other technologies have made it possible to store and retrieve information in many different forms and from any place with a computer and a telephone connection.

The terms **digital library** and **virtual library** have begun to be used to refer to the vast collections of information to which people gain access over the internet, cable television, or some other type of remote electronic connection.
DIGITAL LIBRARY

Arms, W.Y., 2000

“An informal definition of a digital library is a managed collection of information, with associated services, where the information is stored in digital formats and accessible over a network.”

Question 1

Do we still need a physical library as a place and space for learning?
E-LEARNING

A common understanding is that e-learning refers to the use of information technology to deliver a range of learning opportunities.

The rapid development of IT has allowed learning content to be offered in different formats and delivered via internet, intranet or other electronic channels.

See e.g. Sandars, J. & Walsh, K., 2004.
E-LEARNING

Rosenberg, M.J., 2001

E-learning refers to the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance. It is based on three fundamental criteria:

1. E-learning is networked, which makes it capable of instant updating, storage/retrieval, distribution and sharing of instructions or information.
2. E-learning is delivered to the end-user via a computer using standard internet technology.

3. E-learning focuses on the broadest view of learning — learning solutions that go beyond the traditional paradigms of training.

**Question 2**

Do we need a physical library for e-learning?
The answer is **YES**.

The campus will remain the main stage of the university life, and a place for human interaction.

Library buildings have always been the center of the campus and the most important public learning space at the university. The situation has not changed.

**Question 3**

**Why** do we need a physical library for e-learning?
1. E-learning needs an access to information / external knowledge (Rosenberg’s 1st criterion)

The easy and fast access to electronic resources is a crucial part of e-learning.

University libraries/librarians are professionals and responsible for acquiring, selecting and providing access to information/external knowledge for the whole academic community.
The latest external knowledge is increasingly available in the electronic form.
- e-journals
- e-books
- e-textbooks
- databases

University libraries negotiate for licenses to electronic resources and provide an access to them.
Further tasks for university libraries in providing teaching materials:

University libraries can digitize printed materials for e-learning.

University libraries can take responsibility for managing copyright agreements.

Production of metadata to electronic teaching materials improves the access of e-materials.
The collaboration between university teachers and university libraries is important in providing electronic materials for e-learning.

This forms a good foundation for the partnership.

See e.g. Huotari, M-L & Ivonen, M., 2005
2. E-learning needs computers and internet technology (Rosenberg’s 2nd criterion)

Computers, workstations, wireless networks, teaching labs, and other facilities are needed for e-learning in the physical library.

Further, rooms for group work with computers open for groups a joint access to e-learning and virtual environment. E-learning does not mean learning alone.
The concept of a learning center has been introduced as a response to the changing learning and teaching environment within higher education.

In addition to new physical space, this concept includes IT-facilities, and valuable information resources, as well as organizational changes, staff development in university libraries, and building partnership.

See "Centred on Learning". Ed. by E. Oyston, 2003
See also Huotari, M-L & Iivonen, M., 2005
3. E-learning goes beyond the traditional paradigms of learning (Rosenberg’s 3rd criterion)

E-learning will add the flexibility in academic education. Various forms of learning can be combined.

The perspectives of learning and teaching are changing, and many of them (e.g. problem-based learning, research-based education) emphasize the meaning of information seeking / information literacy.
Information literacy, defined as a set of abilities to
- recognize when information is needed, and
- to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the
needed information,
is an increasingly important and demanding
competence area in an electronic environment.

The library has an important role in teaching
information literacy.

See e.g. Huotari, M-L & Iivonen, M., 2005
University libraries act as a gateway to e-learning by...

- ... proving an access to electronic resources
- ... offering good IT-facilities to students, such as networked computers, workstations, teaching labs, and wireless networks for students’ own laptops.
- ... acting as a partner in academic education, especially taking responsibility from teaching information literacy.
References


Thank you!