Modern Library as a Socio-Cultural Space

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Abstract

The article reveals relevant for modern realities issues of library activities transformation and their entry into the social and cultural space. The purpose of the article is to highlight the activities of libraries as one of the oldest socio-cultural institutions in different periods of historical development; consider functioning of book collections and peculiarities of their innovative activity in the information society and transformation into a socio-cultural space. It is noted that traditional mission of the library was to spread literacy, culture, and provide access to information and knowledge. In the 21st century, under information environment, activities of libraries are being transformed and they are becoming centers of not only scientific, but also socially significant information. Forms and types of work with the users are changing. Such new forms as virtual exhibitions, online tours, presentations, video lectures and open access to digital collections, etc. have already become popular. Innovative forms of work including book crossing, book trailer, bibliofresh, quest, library flash mob, information briefing, coworking, coaching etc. are gaining momentum. Electronic libraries that can provide ubiquitous and round-the-clock access to documents of various formats (text, diagram, audio, video data) are becoming popular. Attention is focused on the digital projects of Yaroslav the Wise National Library of Ukraine "Culture of Ukraine", V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine "Electronic Library "Ukraiinka", which contain interesting materials on the documentary heritage of Ukraine. Introduction of the latest information technologies helps to create virtual libraries, blogs, pages in social networks etc. That is, the library as a socio-cultural institution has prospects for its successful further development.

Keywords 1

Library, information technologies, socio-cultural space, innovative forms of work, electronic library.

1. Introduction

The library is one of the oldest cultural institutions. Over the long period of human history social functions of the library have undergone significant changes, both external and internal.

It is known for instance that the purpose of the first libraries was to preserve documents which were clay tablets with cuneiform writing. Private or personal libraries consisting of written books appeared in Ancient Greece in the 5th century BC. In the 6th century, the great libraries of the Mediterranean world were the libraries of Constantinople and Alexandria.

During the Middle Ages, monastic libraries with scriptoriums operating under them, became centers of book learning. Not only the Holy Scriptures and the books of the Fathers of the Church were copied there, but also the works of ancient authors as well.

In the Renaissance era, humanists literally hunted for Greek and Latin texts preserved in the monasteries. Given the enormous value of manuscripts and the laboriousness of their production, books were chained to library shelves in order to keep them safe.

The first known library in the Kyiv state was the library of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, founded by Prince Yaroslav the Wise in 1037. Among the monastic libraries of Ukraine the library of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (XI century) stood out but unfortunately the ancient part of its funds perished in a fire 1718. Later, in the 17th century, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and its library were founded. The number of book collections created at the universities of Lviv (1661), Kharkiv (1805), Kyiv (1834), Chernivtsi (1875) gradually increased on the territory of Ukraine. In the 19th century public libraries began to function in Odesa (1830), Kharkiv (1886) and other cities.

In the modern information society, the latest technologies, penetrating into all spheres of life, cause fundamental shifts in the socio-cultural and economic foundations of social existence. All this encourages libraries to adapt to new conditions, rethink their main tasks and qualitatively change their activities. Nowadays, the most important objectives of these cultural institutions is to provide information to different segments of the population. Now we can observe the process of libraries transformation and their gradual turning into a social institution that contains information, communication and cultural components and ensures stability of connections and relations within society. Thus the research topic is currently extremely relevant.

The purpose of the work is to highlight the activity of libraries as one of the oldest socio-cultural institutions in different periods of historical development; consider the functioning of book collections and the peculiarities of their innovative activity in the conditions of the information society and transformation into a socio-cultural space.

Research methodology is based on the application of general scientific and special methods of cognition, in particular terminological, systemic approach, analysis, synthesis, logical method, method of research results visualization. Methods of content analysis, comparative and analytical monitoring of Internet resources of Ukrainian libraries were also used.

2. Related Works

The problems of the libraries functioning of in the information society are of interest to many Ukrainian and foreign researchers. Thus, M. Slobodianyk's monograph "Library. Document. Communications: selected works" (2010)[12], in which the patriarch of librarianship analyzes the methodological aspects of scientific library research, the development of librarianship in Ukraine, and the transformation of the content of the national library of Ukraine during the formation of the information society is of significant importance.

The article "Archives, libraries and museums - the source basis of national memory, cultural heritage of Ukraine" (2017) [5] by L. Dubrovina, A. Kyrydon, and I. Matyash, in which scientists consider libraries, archives, museums as a component of social institutions that "collect and preserve sources of social, historical, and national memory, organize their preservation, carry out scientific, informational, and cultural activities" remains relevant up to now [5, p. 7].

Problems of information resources consolidation in various spheres of activity and the library one in particular are raised by many scientists today. The monograph of I. Lobuzin "Digital library projects: technological solutions and collections life cycle management" (2016) [8], which considers a wide range of issues related to implementation of library digital projects aimed at digitization of historical, cultural and scientific heritage and organization of library digital technological complexes is great of interest. Besides, the author examines and summarizes international experience on this issue. Much attention is paid in the monograph to highlighting the experience of the V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine towards implementation of digital library projects.

In O. Maryina's monograph "Library in Digital Space" (2017) [9], the original strategy for the development of libraries under digital realities is substantiated in detail, "the main ways of improving the effectiveness of network communication, a new toolkit for preservation, consolidation, updating, and presentation of library information, information resources, methods of involving users of digital communications in library activities" are characterized [9, p. 144].

The issue of the libraries representation in social networks, as well as the types of activities that can be used by libraries to maintain their position in the information and communication space, are discussed in the article by T. Hranchak "Use of social networks by national libraries to present library products and services" (2016) [3] .

All these scientific explorations are an eloquent testimony to the importance of the outlined aspect of research.

3. Libraries Innovative activities of in the socio-cultural space

According to statistics, there are currently almost 16,000 libraries in Ukraine. This indicator is one of the largest in Europe. For example, there are 3.5 thousand libraries in Italy and 9 thousand in Germany. However, Ukrainian libraries are now on the threshold of searching for new ways and possibilities of functioning under new conditions of the information society and the need to transform their activities. Library institutions of Ukraine are actively working towards this goal, studying the experience of foreign countries. Great Britain for instance can be considered one of the bright international examples of public libraries functioning under today's conditions. Their libraries are distinguished primarily by having various free zones, where it is possible not only read, but to be engaged in various activities. Local communities play an important role in this process, since they work according to the principle of subsidiarity. The work experience of the British deserves attention.

Modern conditions dictate the need to change the usual understanding of the library which traditional mission has long been considered the spread of literacy, culture, and access to information and knowledge. But in order to survive in a globalized society, libraries must find new forms of work and change its focus.

English science fiction author Neil Gaiman in his article "Why our future depends on reading" presented deep philosophical reflections on the role of libraries in the society of the 21st century: "But libraries are about freedom. Freedom to read, freedom of ideas, freedom of communication. They are about education (which is not a process that finished the day we leave school or university), about entertainment, about making safe spaces, and about access to information. I worry that here in the 21st century people misunderstand what libraries are and the purpose of them. If you perceive a library as a shelf of books, it may seem antiquated or outdated in a world in which most, but not all, books in print exist digitally. But that is to miss the point fundamentally." [2]. That is, modern libraries should be transformed in the conditions of the information environment and become centers of not only scientific, but also socially significant information. In this way, the library as, first of all, a cultural and educational institution makes a "significant contribution to the life of society" and is included "in social activity as a social institution" [6, p. 24], providing direct access to information sources for different categories of users. That is why the creation of a unified all-Ukrainian information infrastructure and the fastest possible integration into the global library information space are extremely important in the activity of the entire library system.

It is worth emphasizing that activity of modern book collections is aimed not only at providing access to the necessary information, but also at becoming "an important socio-cultural center that will play a decisive role in shaping the worldview of citizens and contribute to the intellectual and moral and aesthetic development of society in general" [4 , with. 311]. All these require changes in the model of communication between the library and users, who are now actively involved in the formation and management of the quality of library services. As practice shows, integration with the life of local communities, cooperation with them on the terms of partnership is decisive for libraries. For example, active citizens can take part in the work of the Public Council at the library, which takes care of its development.

In order to function in new social conditions, library workers must look for new forms of work, strive for continuous development, and use practical experience of advanced institutions and foreign countries. For example, the Scandinavian countries made a breakthrough when they realized the need for mass civic education for adults: they began organizing public schools at libraries in rural areas. In Great Britain, libraries have become moderators of development and are generally called people's universities.

Virtual exhibitions, online tours, presentations, video lectures, open access to digital collections and other new forms of user service have already become popular (Fig. 1.)
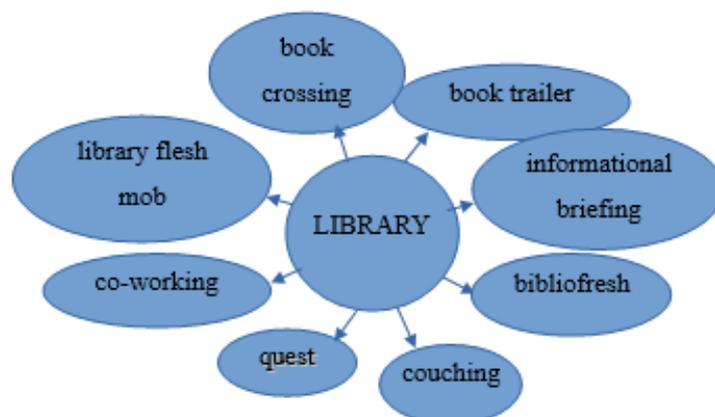

Figure 1: Innovative forms of library work

Such innovative forms of work as follows are gaining popularity:
1. *bookcrossing* – a movement of book lovers who act according to the principle of "read - pass on to others";
2. *book trailer* – a short video clip (up to 3 minutes long) based on the book, which is a modern form of its advertising, means of promotion, encouragement to read;
3. *bibliofresh* – a bibliographic review of book novelties;
4. a quest - an intellectually dynamic game that combines sports orientation, solving intellectual tasks, etc.;
5. *library flash mob* – aims to inform people about the role of modern libraries in society, new opportunities that modernized libraries provide from now on; encouraging reading; drawing attention to the uniqueness of the book as a carrier of information;
6. *information briefing* – a modern way of communicating with users (answers to questions, thematic consultations, etc.);
7. *co-working* – a model of work in which participants, while remaining independent and free, use a common space for their activities;
8. *coaching* – a method of modern counseling that helps the client effectively achieve the set goal, which is manifested in concrete results. Note that it can be used in the library as a form of professional training or during a mass event to solve a problem together with the participants.
And such novelties in the work of libraries are plentiful.

4. Electronic libraries as a web segment of the Internet

The introduction of information and communication technologies contributed to the transformation of the activities of libraries as document and communication structures of society, changes in their tasks, functions, and approaches to user service. Development of information technologies contributed to the emergence of digital technologies and documents in electronic (digital) form, in addition to electronic documents, there appeared digitized copies of documents, websites, databases etc. All over the world, millions of documents, museum objects and other products of intellectual activity are being digitized and organized as public electronic resources.

Recently, electronic libraries (EB), which are also called libraries of the 21st century, are gaining popularity in Ukraine and all over the world. Creation of electronic libraries, according to scientists, is "one of the main directions of the information sphere and an important indicator of the development of the information society" [3, p. 295]. It is worth noting that development of libraries in the network environment reflects modern views on the changing role of the traditional library as a social and cultural institution.

Electronic libraries are an information system containing:

- fund of electronic resources;
- catalog for electronic resources fund;
- a complex of hardware and software tools that support the search system stable operation and provide the possibility of prompt replenishment, registration, long-term storage of the electronic library fund and distributed access to it via the Internet.

Undoubtedly, electronic libraries have a number of advantages compared to traditional ones, namely: they provide more opportunities for information search and processing; there are conditions for libraries and archives for ensuring wide access of users to their funds by presenting them in a computer network; information is available around the clock and everywhere; information materials can be presented in various formats (text, diagram, audio, video data), etc. The ability to store and provide access to documents in various formats is a significant advantage of electronic libraries.

It is noteworthy that in various countries of the world, the most significant and powerful electronic libraries were created on the basis of national libraries. And as practical experience proves, this is a completely natural process, since these libraries are the integrators of national electronic resources, legislators of the technological principles of their organization. Thus, non-commercial digital projects implemented by the national libraries of Poland, France, the USA and Canada have now been successfully implemented (Tab. 1).

Table 1

Non-commercial digital projects of foreign countries

Project name	Owner, founder	Content	Resource	Address, website
AMERICAN MEMORY	US Library of Congress	Digital preservation of American history and culture	Free and open access via the Internet to manuscripts, audio recordings, images, videos, prints, maps, and sheet music that document America's heritage	loc.gov
CANADIANA	Canadiana.org (a coalition of cultural institutions and libraries)	Canadian documentary heritage (history and culture)	Online access to more than 60 million pages of historical primary sources, cataloged in 10 digital collections	www.canadiana.ca
GALLICA	National Library of France	Various types of documents: books, magazines, newspapers, photographs, cartoons, posters, maps, manuscripts, musical scores, audio materials, book miniatures, etc.	more than 6,850,000 digitized documents (including 703,000 books, 149,000 manuscripts, 4,469,000 journals, 1,466,000 images, 54,000 scores and 168,000 maps) (as of September 2020)	gallica.bnf.fr
NATIONAL TREASURES FROM AUSTRALIA'S GREAT LIBRARIES	National Library of Australia	Various documents related to the history and culture of Australia (manuscripts, maps, drawings, paintings)	Over 9 million units	nla.gov.au
POLONA	National Library of Poland (Biblioteka Narodowa)	Materials on Polish culture	7,900,000 storage units	Official website Biblioteka Narodowa

Therefore, it is possible to note a significant number of digitized documents to which non-commercial digital projects of these countries provide access.

In Ukraine, numerous electronic libraries are also being implemented, containing information resources of various directions, volume and quality, which are available to users through the global Internet. For example, one of them is the Yaroslav the Wise National Library of Ukraine, in which the "Culture of Ukraine" electronic library is successfully functioning.

It should be noted that the "Culture of Ukraine" electronic library is an organic component of the library's electronic resources system in general. First of all, it is related to the electronic catalog, with which you can use the resources of the EL and which is part of the "Consolidated catalog of digitized publications" - an integrated information resource containing information about digital content produced by public libraries of Ukraine. The EL project "Culture of Ukraine" is extremely relevant and socially significant. It is based on the "integrated principle of creating resources aimed at a wide range of users, and one that contributes to the implementation of three main functions: educational, scientific and referential. Taking into account current trends of the peoples of Ukraine culture integration into European and global information space, this project provides equal opportunities for free access of users to the resources of culture and art with the help of a global network and thus contributes to strengthening of cultural ties and formation of a positive image of our state in the world" [10].

Formation of the EL fund is carried out by separate types of electronic documents, regardless of their structure - single-volume, multi-volume and serial, in accordance with the defined topic. The subject of equipment of "Culture of Ukraine" EL is:

- electronic document: information recorded on a physical medium in the form of a set of symbols, a sound recording or an image, intended for transmission in time and space using computing equipment and telecommunications for the purpose of storage and public use;
- electronic publication: an electronic document (a group of electronic documents) that has undergone editorial and publishing processing, is intended for distribution in an unchanged form, has source information [11].

V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine initiated and started creation of the "Ukraiinika Electronic Library" integrated resource, aimed at researchers, scientists, specialists, for whom not only the original content of documents is important, but also the accompanying context (temporal, geographical, historical, personal, etc.), which represents socio-cultural space of Ukraine. This e-library is a "combined bibliographic and electronic resource of the entire documentary heritage of Ukraine with the organization of access to scientific reference, bibliographic and textual resources, representation of original documents in digital format with wide possibilities of presentation on the websites of libraries, archives, scientific institutions in the global world networks" [11].

Formation of the "Ukraiinika" fundamental e-library is a natural task of the V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine in view of the concentration in its funds of the most complete array of literature about Ukraine, "including the main part of unique and rare documents, as well as its accumulation of a significant research, methodological and system-technical basis, the enormous efforts of its scientists, specialists in the integration of all the wealth of knowledge about Ukraine" [8, p. 177].

During its functioning, "Ukraiinika" became a popular scientific and educational web resource. As noted by Ukrainian researchers who conducted a survey of higher education students studying in various Ukrainian higher education institutions, they mostly focused their attention on the content features of the "Ukraiinika" e-library, in particular, informational materials about Ukraine, the Ukrainian people, its history, culture and education, documents about flora and fauna, geography, socio-economic opportunities and scientific achievements of Ukraine. That is, the relevant content of "Ukraiinika" has "a powerful potential for the educational, scientific and professional activities of future specialists" [7].

The sources of replenishment of the electronic library are electronic resources of the V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, freely available network electronic resources, Ukrainian studies sites and web resources of scientific and cultural institutions, digitized editions from the funds of the V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine. It is worth noting that among other projects, "Ukraiinika" stands out first of all for its "original system of knowledge organization, based on the implementation of a unique reference and search apparatus and accompanying iconographic information. The created reference apparatus is closely connected with other Ukrainian reference web projects: Wikipedia, Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine (EIU), Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine (IEU), Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine (ESU), Ukrainian National Biographical Archive" [13, p. 44]. This is what gives

grounds for considering the created e-library as a real portal of knowledge about Ukraine. Ukrainian digital library projects are also presented on the website of the National Historical and Cultural Heritage Digital Library (Tab. 2).

Table 2
Ukrainian library digital projects

Name	Institutions	Content	Funds	Information resources
DIASPORIANA	Ukrainian diaspora electronic library	Rare and valuable emigration documents and publications from different years	21,890 storage units. Some of the digitized books are borrowed from the Internet	Free access to digitized documents via the Internet
LIBRARIA	Ivan Franko Scientific Library LNU, State scientific archival library	Archive of Ukrainian periodicals online	602 titles, 93,622 issues, 740,274 pages of periodicals	Possibility of integrated search
HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF UKRAINE	National Historical Library of Ukraine	Profile thematic collections, rare and valuable electronic documents, publications	over 800,000 storage units	Electronic documents
CULTURE OF UKRAINE	Yaroslav the Wise National Library of Ukraine	Materials on Ukrainian culture and art	13,458 documents	Integrated information resource
ANTIQUE ENGRAVING	Odesa National Scientific Library	A collection of various domestic and foreign engravings of the 16th–20th centuries.	more than 200 thousand rare documents	Database, electronic catalogs

Therefore, digital projects of the leading national libraries of Ukraine are already a valuable archive and resource that provides information sources for culture, science and education. They perform the role of operational providing a wide audience of users with historical and cultural sources, popularizing the positive image of Ukrainian culture in the world, creating a consolidated insurance fund of digital copies of documents of the national heritage of Ukraine for future generations.

It is noteworthy that international digital projects also have Ukrainian documents in their funds, in particular, documents of the V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine (Tab. 3.).

Table 3
International digital projects in which Ukrainian documents are presented

Project name	Owner, institution	Content	Funds	Ukrainian documents in funds	Office address, website
EUROPEANA	Europeana Foundation	Cultural property in digital form from the funds of libraries, archives and museums of Europe	4.6 million digitized books, maps, photos, newspapers, clips, etc	V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine documents	Royal Library of the Netherlandskb.nl

Project name	Owner, institution	Content	Funds	Ukrainian documents in funds	Office address, website
PPO - POLONICA PHILOSOPHICA ORIENTALIA (2018-2023)	Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland)	Philosophy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (XVI-XVIII centuries) and historiography of philosophy in Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine	-	V.I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine documents - 5	Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland) http://www.uj.edu.pl/
WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY (WDL)	US Library of Congress, supported by UNESCO	Universal heritage: manuscripts, maps, rare books, musical scores, sound recordings, films, photographs, drawings and other materials	8021 available objects (as of 2018)	112 Ukrainian objects (as of 2013)	www.wdl.org

It should be emphasized that possibility of using online platform of European digital culture requires the right conditions for continuation of digitization, online accessibility and preservation of cultural heritage, and formation and use of information resources is a key problem of creating a single information space.

Importance of integration into a single information space of the cultural heritage objects of humanity stored in the funds of various social institutions, in particular libraries, museums, archives, is recognized at the world level. Consolidated electronic information resources are formed with the aim of ensuring access to a wide range of users, preserving the cultural heritage of humanity, and forming a single high-quality information environment.

A new e-library created by The Mozart Group is rather unusual. In the summer of 2022, they launched a platform called "Mini-Library of the Ukrainian Military" (https://tmg-training.org.ua/) for defenders of Ukraine (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Website "Mini-Library of the Ukrainian Military" (https://tmg-training.org.ua/)

The library exists in the form of a website and a mobile application for Android. Work at the iOS version continues. It features Weapons, Tactics, Medicine, Explosives, videos, books, and how-to guides, such as how to use the NLAW. There are manuals on the defense of cities in modern conditions,

disposal of explosive objects, etc. Andy Milborne, founder of The Mozart Group, commented on the purpose of this platform: "Knowledge is vital on the frontlines and near the frontlines. They, on a level with weapons, can help the military destroy the enemy and win, so it is difficult to underestimate the importance of such products for the military" [1].

As a result of the latest information technologies implementation in the activities of libraries, virtual libraries are emerging - a public network distributed in the telecommunications space, focused on data exchange between libraries. The virtual library environment consists of a number of libraries, geographically distant from each other, which perform the functions of integrated communication and obtaining information about library resources. Documents in the virtual library are stored in machine-readable form. A user accessing the World Wide Web search engines can retrieve them without even having to be a library user.

The use of information and communication technologies allows the electronic library user to significantly improve the process of finding and obtaining the necessary publication. As a rule, virtual libraries provide their clients with almost the same basic services as traditional ones; in particular, it is an opportunity to use library catalogs with the organization of search and creation of a list of orders; organization of access to the library fund, which is represented by electronic analogues of various publications (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.).

Virtual libraries can be universally focused or have publications on a specific subject. The majority of electronic libraries are created on the basis of traditional ones with the corresponding conversion into electronic format and the organization of remote access to them.

One of the options for using Internet resources is the formation of a library blogosphere. Extreme popularity of blogs is due to two main factors: first, publishing information on the Internet with the help of blogs is quite easy; the second is instant availability of published information on the Internet. In particular, most foreign and domestic library institutions are represented on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Blogspot, VKontakte, etc. At the same time, it is convincing that social network tools help convey information to users in a very convenient way, as well as promote library activities.

Today, the library blogosphere acts as a kind of "mirror of life", which reflects both the actual problems of book collections functioning in modern society, and opinion of the library community about these problems. Blogs have become a full-fledged source of library content. A library blog for a modern library is not "only the use of tools and methods of communication on the Internet, which are not traditional for library sites, but are optimally suited to the format of a library blog, but also an open platform for users (readers) attracted from social networks, most of which are loyal to blogs and not to official library sites; the possibility of creating a corporate resource with a sufficient amount of thematic content (which is regularly added); optimized for search engines, which allows you to constantly attract the target audience and draw their attention to the library" [3, p. 25]; building an emotional connection with the user (reader) thanks to the personal aspect of the information published by blog authors, about library life and library work; conveying to the audience the official position of the library in an unofficial form, testing new ideas, etc.

Despite the fact that blog, as a tool for online communication between the reader and the library, began to be used by libraries relatively recently, book collectors got the opportunity to quickly inform their readers about events in libraries, promote their information products and services. It is even possible to predict that library blogs will retain the role of a simple and cheap means of content delivery, which will enable the user to receive operational information on issues of interest to him and new events in the life of libraries.

Every year, the number of supporters of social networks increases. Many library institutions of Ukraine already have their own pages. Besides, even professional communities are created in social networks. In particular, one of the initiators of such a community is the Ukrainian Library Association (ULA). Let's name some of them: "Libraries" - the initiative group of the Assembly of Cultural Figures of Ukraine", "School of Library Advocacy", "RDA in Ukraine" and others. There is also a youth section of the ULA: "School of a Young Librarian of the ULA", "Educational Webinars for Librarians", "Bookcrossing", "Book in Trend", etc.

Library specialists come together to discuss issues of media literacy ("Information hygiene", "Library & MIL (media and information literacy)"); development of information technologies in modern book collections ("Electronic books and e-readers in libraries", "RFID in libraries", "Open School: Cloud services in education", "Library IT gadgets"); exchange experience in promoting reading

("Book + I = library!", "Add Reading"), etc. Librarians of Ukraine are also members of the international professional communities "International Young Librarians Academy", "Digitization in libraries" and others.

Social media tools help libraries deliver information to the community in a convenient way, expand the range of services to meet the information needs of as many community members as possible, advertise library services, communicate with potential users on the terms of the users themselves. Pages in "social networks are used by libraries as a local information resource, closer to the user than the library website. In social networks, you can find contact information, announcements about upcoming events and promotions, photos of the library and its staff, greetings and feedback from readers" [14, p. 185].

5. Conclusions

Therefore, the library has wide opportunities and the right to exist in a globalized society. Book collections of the 21st century are such a modified space in which past and future, antiquity and modernity are organically intertwined. Today's library is the era of books and the Internet combination. Taking into account the changes taking place in these institutions as well as growth of the information component in their activities, in our opinion, we can talk about transformation of libraries into a social and cultural institution of a modern society.

World experience shows that an important step in the development of libraries and their provision of information needs of users is the mandatory creation of information-library networks, the search for and implementation of new forms of work.

The virtual information space of library institutions, formed to meet the information needs of users, includes such virtual representations as: sites, blogs, pages of user groups in popular social networks, etc.

In addition, there is an urgent need to rethink the role of the library employees and modernize their training program, to launch a retraining program for working employees; connect the objectives of libraries with the needs of communities and citizens, then the latter will have the motivation to maintain them; to form the humanitarian strategy of the country in general and to determine the role of libraries in its implementation. All these issues require an urgent solution.

Therefore, libraries have a future. We just have to create it skillfully and intelligently. In our opinion, the words of Neil Gaiman, whom we have already mentioned above, who wrote: "Libraries really are the gates to the future. So it is unfortunate that, round the world, we observe local authorities seizing the opportunity to close libraries as an easy way to save money, without realising that they are stealing from the future to pay for today. They are closing the gates that should be open" [2].

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