

Report of the course ÖLUL13 H16-1 Digital Library Management 15 ECTS BMDD116h

The course in Digital Library Management is included in the international Master's programme LIS: Digital Library and Information Services. It is one of the first courses in the programme, running parallel with Technology for Digital Library courses. Both courses complement each other introducing students to the main components of digital libraries – technology, organizational background, and main components of digital libraries seen from different perspectives. The course in Digital Library Management leads to a number of learning outcomes important to the programme. After completing the course the students should be able to:

- To identify different types of digital libraries
- To explain problems related to management, planning and implementation of digital libraries from a theoretical perspectives and Describe and explain their implications for practice
- To describe general financial, human resource, technology, and time management procedures required for running a digital library
- To describe legal issues involved in creation and running a digital library and apply this knowledge in organisational environment
- To Design a plan for cost-benefit analysis , marketing and evaluation of the digital library and its services

The course is delivered through filmed and written lectures, individual studies of literature, participation in group discussions, submission of individual written assignments of the main topics included in the course: user demand for digital libraries, their aims and missions; collection development (acquisition forms and channels, main structural parts, management of access and finding tools); building of digital services; planning, implementing, marketing, and evaluating of digital libraries; ethical and legal issues involved in running digital libraries; requirements for professional competence in digital library area. The final task draws on all other tasks in the course and requires applying what students have learned within a project improving a certain feature of a concrete digital library (both selected individually by the students over the whole period since the start of the course).

In the autumn 2016, the course was run by two teachers: Elena Maceviciute (responsible for the course, lecturing, communicating with students, monitoring participation, examining submissions), Tom Wilson (leading discussions, presenting lectures, examining submissions). There were 35 students registered to the course. 25 of those completed at least one of the tasks and 15 have passed the examination. All of them have done a very good and excellent job on these tasks. Six others are still working to complete the tasks required for the final assessment.

Overall, teachers on the course are very satisfied with the work of the students. Those, who work constantly on the tasks, demonstrate independent thinking, good analytical skills, are

interested and involved in studies. Some, of course, are less engaged or maybe lack study skills, but cover the ground by hard work.

Those, who had not finished the course so far, mainly run into the difficulties to balance the demands from the job or family life with studies. Two students from Rwanda have other problems related to the local context, such as poor connectivity, high work load, lack of study and English language skills, so we set different priorities for them, so as not to compromise the quality of studies and learning outcomes.

There are 10 students who have not submitted any task and have not participated in any course activity, though only 2 of them have never logged into the PingPong course site. Thus, we may expect that they have set other study priorities (we may see them re-registered to this course later) or decided that the programme does not meet their expectations and quit altogether.

11 (32%) out of registered students have filled the course evaluation questionnaire. The overall evaluation was very positive. The students appreciated the contents of the course, its connection to real digital libraries and their work. However, it also has shown that teachers should refer more to the actual learning outcomes and help students set their achievements in the light of those outcomes.

Some students mentioned topics that they enjoyed most and that could be expanded: ethics and legal issues, economics and leading staff.

The instruction material and lectures on PingPong, the amount and level of course literature, the meaningfulness of tasks to the studies, the number and level of tasks received highest scores. Only one student found the number of tasks too big. Two students have found the final task either unclear or repetition of the previous work, but the others have appreciated it as a synthesis of what they have learned and possibility to apply in solving a practical problems of their own.

All in all, the study materials and tasks seem to be in balance – challenging and motivating, but not stressful and disorienting. The deadlines of submissions coincided with submissions in other courses at the end of the term and two students felt that the quality of their work went down at that time. The content was also evaluated as very relevant, not irrelevant topics were mentioned and some should be expanded even to separate courses (e.g. ethical and legal issues in digital libraries).

Only one student assesses time spent on this course as more than 20 hours, most allocate from 10 to 20 hours per week, some between 5-10 hours. The difference may reflect not only the engagement, but also the demands from other parallel courses (Technology) that require from some students much greater input because they may be more different from previous studies. Spent time may also be related to the quality and freshness of study skills. Students also reported fluctuation in work intensity that increased before the delivery of tasks. Three

students thought the time they allocated was not sufficient for studies, seven thought it was enough.

The communication with teachers was deemed to be very helpful by five, helpful by four and satisfactory by 2 students. It seemed that the least effective communication means were the Ask section followed by PIM. The best communication was experienced through e-mail. Again, it seems that students have not read a special Communication with teachers section in the course guide. This forms and times of communication with teachers need to be more clearly specified in different ways to reach all students.

Critical comments:

1. Some students expressed need to have more materials related to the tasks (examples of business cases, marketing plans, PowerPoint presentations). PowerPoint presentation for some was a new task and may require more instruction in the future. More practical examples would be welcome in topics like marketing and financial aspects of digital libraries.
2. Confusing PingPong course site with too much information in different places.
3. Marketing unit and task of writing a marketing plan was confusing at least to one student. The teachers should look into its formulation.
4. Online seminars were criticized from the point of view of number of participants (too many) and the lack of clearer guidance for presentation and interaction in them. The technical glitches did not help to overcome these problems. The online discussions were appreciated more, though meeting with other students online meant much to some of the students. This form of interaction and discussion will be thought through for the next term.

Elena Maceviciute