The academic libraries & the social responsibility challenge: REBIUN report

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CRUE REBIUN Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias

Background

REBIUN, the spanish academic libraries network, has as one of the its strategic goals promoting the integration of the libraries in the university's objectives, including the integration of social responsibility or CSR. As a first stage to achieving it, **REBIUN** has prepared a report on libraries' contribution to university social responsibility.
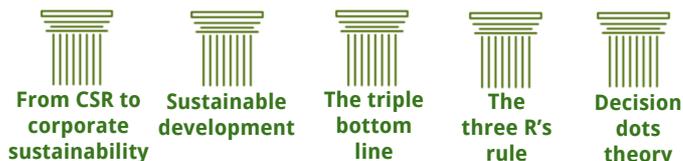
Keys

2 Levels of the library contribution

5 Pillars of the REBIUN report

Integrating the library in the institutional strategy
(participation of the library in the institutional initiatives of social responsibility)

The sustainable and responsible library
(integrate social, economic and environmental sustainability into library services and activities)

From CSR to corporate sustainability	Sustainable development	The triple bottom line	The three R's rule	Decision dots theory

Basic approach

The survival of the university and its libraries both in the medium and long term depends on its economic feasibility, commitment with the environmental sustainability and socially responsible performance.

"... library consumption is becoming economically unsustainable, and through various fees on users, is threatening the core library mission of providing free and open access to information for all users."

M.A. JANKOWSKA, "A call for sustainable library operations and services", *C&RL News,* 69, 6 (2008)

The report

http://eprints.rclis.org/19547/
http://eprints.rclis.org/18193/

The sustainable and responsible (academic) library

Collections

E-resources have negative environmental impacts due to energy use and the need to recycle electronic devices required to use them as well as computer consumables

Applying green ICT
Stimulate responsible behaviors to users about consumption of paper, ink and toner
Consortia and national site licensing
Open access promotion and practice
Just-in-time acquisitions policies
Far-reaching agreements to share resources
Print copies systems based on network printers and double-sided copies
De-selection, weeding and duplicates policies

Library buildings

The daily operation of library buildings produces high levels of energy consumption for heating, cooling and lighting involving negative environmental impacts and high economic costs

Maintenance and cleaning without toxic or harmful chemicals
Raising awareness among staff and users for a responsible usage of the building
Environmental sustainability criteria when programming the opening hours
Efficient and environmentally respectful furniture projects

Processes & services

The bureaucratic tradition of university administration generates and handles a large amount of printed documents that along with the printed collections, makes that the main source of carbon footprint and waste generation in libraries is paper use

Generalization of e-administration
Redesigning library processes to reduce their documentary and bureaucratic requirements
Provision of bibliographic services
Creation and maintenance of open access repositories

User training

Libraries have a strong educational dimension (user training, informational literacy, reference services). Incorporating sustainability into the training activities fosters also its promotion and dissemination

Provide training in responsible and sustainable use of libraries in all the courses
Organizing monographic courses or activities on the implications on sustainability in library
Co-organizing actions in the field of environmental literacy

Conclusions

To improve the contribution of libraries to the viability, reputation and responsible performance of their universities, libraries should:

☑ Adjust themselves to what their institutions decide with regard to CSR, which includes participation in the general strategies, plans and projects, as well as collaboration in the committees, workgroups, etc. created to drive them.

☑ Become promoters of sustainability and social responsibility initiatives.

☑ Enhace the sustainability philosophy and criteria and integrate them deeper into typical library services and activities.

☑ Try to integrate the components and initiatives which can be developed by libraries in their genuine field of activity, into the CSR strategies, plans and projects of their universities.