

Chapter 3

Convergence towards Excellence Diversity: Mapping the Field of E-Resources Emerging Dynamics

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ABSTRACT

This chapter extends current discussions about excellence and proposes a look beyond the dominant line of e-resources research where transition cycles in information management, knowledge management, competences management, and performance management are the multi-contextual value creators for individuals and organizations. This is done by an extensive review of European policies (single information market, agenda for culture) in two steps: first, excellence triggers are analyzed, discussing digital agenda and consumer culture. Next, an integrated model of e-resources excellence management is presented. It locates the argument for the importance of convergence in excellence diversity where e-resources values are uniquely and contextually interpreted, requiring understanding, and assesses customer consumption processes as an experiential, social, and cultural phenomenon. A variety of informational behaviors, skills, and activities is the measure of the complexity of personal values possibilities and of excellence framework development, maturity, and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

E-resources¹ have gained a foothold in library practices worldwide; however, emerging changes in excellence models and in the structure of information use are challenging the traditional methods

of achieving strategic organizational benefits. One of the key questions facing e-resources managers is how to combine existing skills and value perceived by users and other stakeholders to greatly increase the impact of these practices on excellence results in the new paradigm of digital transition.

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Tracing the development of library assessment methods helps researchers to understand better the performance cycles and the evolution of quality management theories and models. Results orientation, customer orientation, leadership, process management, people development and involvement, training, partnerships and corporate social responsibility are convergence concepts that maintain its topicality and relevance. Among the emerging themes, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM, 2003, 2012) has emphasized creativity and innovation, sustainability, organizational agility, risk management and promotion of products and services.

Current models tend to analyze reciprocal effects between technological issues and organizational issues without a clear focus on transitions phases. Based on the concept of Excellence and the analysis of library impacts, this chapter aims to present the mapping of the field of e-resources emerging dynamics that cross the European Agenda for Culture and the Digital Agenda (2010-2020). This contribution is anchored in an Evidence-Based Librarianship research line developed in Portugal since 2007 (Ochôa & Pinto, 2007).

The chapter is organized in two main sections; each of them examines the main challenges faced by the current excellence concept: the convergent/divergent directions and the dynamics of e-resources field. The context of analysis is focused on how e-resources react and contribute to the accelerated changes of a knowledge-based economy in the European Union (EU). Based on institutional European sources and on an e-resources management (ERM) literature review, we focused on documents that critically present the ongoing change. They cover a time span of twelve years (2000-2012) and respond to four specific selection criteria:

1. Studies on the evaluation of e-resources impact in libraries.
2. Critical studies that explore ERM problems or good practices.

3. Current investigations about Excellence.
4. Comparative information (studies that report information to one or more scientific fields).

The chapter suggests the necessity of consolidating a theoretical framework that can support and explore new visions in libraries quality management.

We categorized two e-resources excellence triggers - *Digital Agenda* and *Consumer Culture* - within two dynamics – convergence and diversity and five emergent excellence fields: *Knowledge and skills in quality management*, *Perception and trust*, *Information behavior*, *Quality of life*, and *Society and economy*. E-resources convergence and diversity dynamics are considered in an integrated model where transition points are highlighted: *e-skills*, *e-consumption*, *e-value* and *e-excellence*.

As the growth of evidences about the ways consumption practices impact on e-resources use continues to accelerate, it is appropriate to reflect on the directions this movement is taking. A multitude of “excellences” is now possible, creating new models and assumptions regarding e-resources, providing the context for the recommendations and action steps outlined at the end of this chapter.

CONVERGENT/DIVERGENT DIRECTIONS: ROOTS FOR E-RESOURCES EXCELLENCE

The concept of *Excellence* is closely tied to the development of quality management theories and models and to performance evaluation dynamics in organizations. According to EFQM’s business model (EFQM, 2012), the main concepts are focused on results orientation principles, leadership, processes management, development and involvement of people, continuous training, partnerships and social responsibility. Organizational maturity and sustainability of results pose new issues related

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