

# The transparency of CSUC member university libraries

Carina Rey Martin and Concepción Rodríguez Parada  
*Departament de Biblioteconomia, Documentació i Comunicació Audiovisual,  
University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, and*

Enric Camón Luis  
*Escola Superior de Ciències Socials i de l'Empresa,  
Tecnocampus-Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Mataró, Spain*

558

Received 6 March 2018  
Revised 22 February 2019  
Accepted 4 March 2019

## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to analyse the level of transparency of the libraries of Catalan universities that are members of the Consortium of University Services of Catalonia (CSUC).

**Design/methodology/approach** – The analysis involved reviewing the information available on the websites of the ten libraries belonging to CSUC. For each library's website, the presence of 18 indicators was explored. These indicators had been defined by the Commitment and Transparency Foundation (Spain).

**Findings** – There is a notable difference between the level of transparency of Catalan universities and their libraries. Moreover, the universities' culture of transparency is not reflected in that of the libraries. Four of the libraries can be considered transparent because they have accomplished from 12 to 18 indicators; three can be considered “translucent”, due to their indicators ranging from 11 to 7 points; and three are considered opaque as a result of obtaining from 1 to 5 indicators.

**Practical implications** – There is a need to review the volume and quality of information that can be consulted on library websites, considering that all services and entities funded with public money must inform citizens of the principles that govern their management and the results obtained.

**Originality/value** – The information regarding transparency is incomplete and should be organised with parameters that make it easier to find. Libraries that occupy the lowest positions in the ranking all belong to private universities. Their poor results are due to the lack of information justifying their management or providing information on how the service is organised. Some conclusions of this study are very similar to those of the study on Madrid's Madroño Consortium (Pacios Lozano, 2016) which has been taken into account in this paper.

**Keywords** University libraries, Websites, Transparency, Indicators, Consortium of University Service of Catalonia (CSUC), Libraries management

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

The entry into force in Catalonia of Act 19/2014, of 29 December, on transparency, access to public information and good governance obliges the various levels of government to “inform citizens, in accordance with the principle of responsibility, of their activity and of the management of public resources”. As stated in the preamble of the act, transparency, access to public information and good governance are three key factors for assessing the operation and democratic quality of government. Specifically, the government must report actively on “its organisation, operation, major decisions and management of public resources” so that these can be evaluated by citizens. Management transparency is inextricably linked to citizens' right to access information about this management.

However, transparency should go beyond merely meeting the established legal requirements: it should become something more powerful and transformational. This will be



achieved when the culture of accountability is incorporated as an essential, customary practice to generate trust and credibility among users and citizens, particularly if we consider that this culture is directly related to the organisational maturity of institutions.

According to Uvalle Berrones (2016), “the value of transparency should be supported by the quality of institutions, which achieve their mission to the extent that they define the regulations that govern them, so that public policies can be effective and consistent with the imperatives of the associated life”. Therefore, transparency is not an aim, but an instrument used by organisations to achieve their aims, based on real knowledge of the information they possess. Transparency also increases the quality of policies and actions, democratic control and rendering of accounts; facilitates governability; prevents corruption; contributes to enhancing efficacy and efficiency; and increases citizens’ trust in institutions. We can say without hesitation that there is a clear correlation between good practices, codes of ethics, certificates, audits, strategic plans and transparency, given that all these factors are directly related with the aim of transparency. The culture of transparency is, therefore, due not only to the entry into force of legislation, but also to the fact that assessment instruments are becoming widespread. Therefore, transparency is clear evidence of the “maturity” of organisations, as described in the studies by Moreno-Sardà *et al.* (2017).

Information technologies have become exceptional channels for communication with users, and essential tools for disseminating information on the management of organisations. Such information should be presented with clarity, in a structured way, and with a reusable format. It must be true, objective, easily understandable, updated periodically and easy to consult. Catalan legislation envisages the creation of the Transparency Portal as a platform that refers to the websites of government bodies, organisations or services, because it is considered a channel for accountability.

But what is the scope of application of the law? Who does it oblige? In general, it must be observed by the Catalan Government, as well as local entities, organisations, associations and institutions in which the government has a majority interest or that are associated with the government, and physical and legal persons who undertake public functions, among others. The law includes Catalan public universities and all the associations, foundations or organisations that are affiliated with them.

Catalan public universities have increased and improved the information on their webpages to comply with legislation. However, the few studies undertaken to date clearly show that university libraries do not have the same degree of transparency on their websites, or have not made the same effort as their parent organisations to reach this level.

## 2. Objectives and methodology

The general aim of this study was to analyse the level of transparency of Catalan university libraries that are members of the Consortium of University Services of Catalonia (2013), using information available on their websites. As university libraries provide services for universities, they must also comply with legal provisions[1] that establish the need to disseminate information on their activities and management, in accordance with the aforementioned Act 19/2014 of 29 December.

The study also had two specific objectives:

- to compare universities’ level of transparency with that obtained in the analysis of their library services, and
- to verify the correlation between the university’s philosophy of transparency and the library’s basic service.

The research is based on innovative methodology proposed by Ana Reyes Pacios Lozano (2016) in her study of the Madroño Consortium, in which she defined assessment indicators to

measure the transparency of university libraries in the immediate environment of the institution to which they belong. The indicators were associated with the “table of most relevant areas for accountability”, or information areas, defined by the Commitment and Transparency Foundation (FCyT) (Martin Cavanna and Barrio, 2016). This public institution periodically publishes reports to stimulate the continuous improvement of universities, using a model that establishes the general rules of compliance with transparency and accountability, but without assessing performance.

Our analysis was undertaken in the second fortnight of November 2017, using information available on the websites of Catalan university libraries. As mentioned above, we based the analysis on the indicators proposed by Pacios Lozano and the FCyT report on the voluntary transparency of Spanish public university websites. When we identified the document or information relating to each indicator, we assigned a value of 1 to the university library.

To ensure the rigour of the study, we considered Codina Bonilla (2000) and Jiménez Piano and Ortiz-Repiso Jiménez (2007) contributions on aspects that determine the quality of a website:

- **Visibility:** the information should be easy to find and visible; contents must be linked and recognisable, and the path to them should not be too long. Although this concept seems logical, it can cause controversy. Some studies suggest that if it takes more than four clicks to locate some information, then it is considered difficult to find. However, other authors state that the user’s information needs are more relevant than the number of clicks required to find data.
- **Accessibility:** this concept is closely related to the above, and refers to how easy it is to access a website. Factors that facilitate use of the website or availability are considered. Specifically, information should be transformable and understandable and users should be able to interact with it.
- **Currentness:** the date on documents should be recent, to show that they are up to date.
- **Clarity:** the information that is provided should be comprehensible and available in more than one language.

### **3. The transparency of CSUC member university libraries, determined by their websites**

For decades, university libraries have developed a culture of evaluation, using statistical data and quantitative annual indicators to justify investments or demonstrate their level of quality, performance or efficacy, and, to a lesser extent, their impact. Many university libraries have participated in institutional evaluation processes and obtained EFQM or ISO quality certificates. However, they have not shown great interest in transparency, which they have associated more with drawing up reports for merely informative purposes, than as a measure to provide an account of their management and activities.

Despite this relative indifference, the most representative professional entities have called for transparent action by libraries. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2008) maintains that transparency is the basis of good governance and the first step in addressing corruption, and states that libraries are “in their very essence transparency institutions, dedicated to making available the most accurate and unbiased educational, scientific and technical, and socially relevant information to one and all. The information materials and access provided by libraries and information services contribute to good governance by enlarging the knowledge of citizens and enriching their

discussions and debates”. Similarly, the Spanish Academic Libraries Network (REBIUN, 2011) has boosted transparency in its Third Strategic Plan 2020 as one of the general objectives in Strategic Area 4 is that member libraries should include information on statistics and indicators in their activity reports as an example of transparency and an instrument for managing quality. The CSUC has a transparency area, from which it disseminates information on its management. Therefore, the analysis presented below is supported by the guidelines of professional associations, the current legal framework and citizens’ increased awareness of their right to democratic management of the institutions and public organisations that they contribute to funding.

Seven of the ten university members of the CSUC are public, while the remaining three are run by private initiative. The public university members are: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Universitat de Barcelona (UB), Universitat de Girona (UdG), Universitat de Lleida (UdL), Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) and Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV). The private university members are: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)[2], Universitat Ramón Llull (URL) and Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya (UVic)[3].

We analysed each library’s website[4] to determine the presence of 18 indicators (designated with the letters a/r) associated with eight information areas (see Table I). In this paper, we describe the indicators in descending order of frequency, according to the number of libraries in which they were found. Then, we compare the presence of indicators with the level of transparency of the respective university, and check whether there is a relationship between the university’s philosophy of transparency and the library’s basic service.

We have divided the libraries into three categories depending on the values they obtained and using the nomenclature proposed by the FCyT: transparent (18–12 points), a group that includes the UB, UAB, UPC and UPF; translucid (11–7 points), including the URV, UdG and UdL; and opaque (5–1 points), which include the three private universities, the UVic, URL and UOC.

The indicator that was found most frequently was the staff directory (Information Area 5, Indicator k), which can be consulted in the 11 libraries in the sample. However, the information that is provided varies. For example, the UdG only gives incomplete

Information areas (FCyT)	Indicators (Pacios)
1. Purpose of the service and objectives	(a) Definition of the mission (b) Strategic plan
2. Governing bodies and operation regulations	(c) Members of the library committee (d) Regulations (e) Specific regulations for services (f) Charter of users’ rights and responsibilities
3. Services offered	(g) Service charter
4. Information resources	(h) Policy/programme of collection management (i) Institutional policy of open access
5. Staff	(j) Organisation chart (k) Staff directory
6. Results	(l) Management indicators (scorecard) (m) Satisfaction surveys (n) Annual report or results report (o) Awards, prizes and certificates
7. Financial information	(p) Budget (q) Tendered contracts and calls
8. Membership of networks and other collaborations	(r) Networks with which the library works and cooperates

Source: Pacios Lozano (2016)

**Table I.**  
Proposal of indicators  
of transparency  
grouped by relevant  
information areas,  
according to the  
FCyT model

---

information, organised by centres and without including the names of staff members or their jobs; while the UOC attaches photographs.

Membership of consortiums, networks or other collaborations (8, r) was the second most common indicator. All eight libraries (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL and UVic) state that they belong to the consortium under study (CSUC) and to REBIUN. Three of the libraries (UB, UPC and UOC) are also members of the Association of European Research Libraries. In 2016, the UB joined the group *Bibliotecas comprometidas con la excelencia* (libraries committed to excellence) and is a member of the Confederation of Open Access Repositories. In turn, the UPC is a part of Digital Access to Research Theses – Europe, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition – Europe and ORCID. The UOC participates in the distance library network of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities, collaborates with the Open University Library and is a member of the International Group of Ex Libris Users. Another collaboration network that is notable is Open Library Learning Labs (LABO). LABO was created in 2013 to bring science closer to citizens, and to promote exchanges of good practices between some university libraries (UPC, UdG, UOC and UB) and Catalan public libraries, under the coordination of the Government of Catalonia's Department of Culture.

Regulations (2, d), which include information on the organisation of the service and tend to be approved by the university's governing council, are present on the websites of seven libraries, but under different names. For example, in some instances they are called "Library service regulations" (UB, UAB, UPC, UdG and UdL) or similarly "General library regulations" (UPF). The "Regulations for the organisation and running of the CRAI" (URV) cover the services offered by the library, as well as all services that assist learning, teaching and research, such as information technologies. The UVic takes a different approach: it has specific regulations for each service separately (loan, document delivery, use of laptops, etc.), rather than general regulations.

Considerable differences were found in the Specific regulations for services (2, e) of the eight libraries that have drawn up such documents (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, URV and UVic). Some are partial specific regulations that even include "Instructions for the correct use of libraries", outlining rules for behaviour, eating and drinking in the library, or the use of mobile phones. All libraries have regulations on loans. The need to regulate the loan of different media or devices has led to specific guidelines being drawn up for laptops (UB, UdG), cameras (UB) and workrooms (UAB, UB and UPC), and four types of loan: interlibrary, document delivery service, *in situ* and library consortium (PUC)[5]. In addition, the complexity of using the digital library has led to the creation of specific rules to govern the conditions of use (UB, UPC and URV). The UB also has loan regulations for works for exhibitions, which is further evidence of the degree of specificity found in some of these guidelines. Notable is the initiative of the UdG, which has created 1-min video clips to explain some of these aspects educationally[6].

Nine libraries have drawn up and disseminated an annual report or report of results (6, n) for informative purposes: activities are described but not evaluated. Six of the reports are recent. The reports of the UB, UAB and UPC (which links the report to the strategic plan) are from 2016, while those of the UPF, UdG and UdL were all published in 2015. Surprisingly, the report on the UOC Virtual Library is for academic year 2010–2011. Another notable case is that of the URV and UVic, as data on their libraries are contained in the general report on the institution, which could make it difficult to include in this study.

Eight libraries have drawn up an institutional policy of open access (4, i): UB (2011), UAB (2012), UPC (2009), UPF (2011), UdG (2012), UdL (2012), URV (2013) and UOC (2010). However, it is not always easy to consult this policy as it is included under headings associated with various aspects. For example, the UPC includes its open access policy in the section "Teaching staff", while the UdL has put it in "Access to scientific output" and

---

complemented it with educational material and computer graphics. The UOC has given it a prominent position: the library's home page contains a link to a YouTube video of just over a minute explaining how to obtain open access contents and services provided by the library[7].

Seven libraries have drawn up a charter of users' rights and duties (2, f), which tends to be associated with the operation regulations. This charter is presented in two main ways: the UPF, UdG and UdL have created a separate document, while the UB, UAB, UPC and URV have included it within the library's service charter.

Currently, seven libraries (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdL, URV and Vic) have a service charter (3, g) for their users. The charter's structure is similar in all cases, and is in line with the established standard (Standard UNE 93200:2008), except for the UPC's service charter, which does not include the required quality commitments or associated indicators, and therefore, seems to be closer to a statement of rights and duties. This is also the case of the UdG, which lists the portfolio of services offered. However, unlike the UPC, it does not call this a service charter, but includes it under a three-part heading: "Our commitment. Your rights. Your duties". The UdL service charter is extremely long (over 20 pages), which makes it difficult to consult, and does not reflect the format proposed in the standard.

The information area referring to the purpose of the service and the objectives encompasses two indicators: Mission (1, a) and Strategic Plan (1, b). Six libraries specify their *raison d'être* or mission (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdL and URV). The first five place this information in a prominent position or a specific section to make it easy to find, while the URV includes it in the service charter.

Five strategic plans (1, b) are accessible, three of which are still in force: UB (2015–2018), UAB (2015–2018), and UPC (2015–2020). The UDG library's strategic plan corresponds to the three-year period 2013–2016, and that of the UOC refers to the university's general strategic plan (2014–2020), and is, therefore, not considered valid for this study. A separate case is that of the UdL, which has recently published the "Action plan of the Library and Documentation Service 2016–2020". Although this document is remarkably similar to a strategic plan, its creators have given it a different name.

The Budget (7, p) is a key indicator of the financial area and tends to be an opaque document, because few libraries provide this information (only four) and it is hard to find. The most common practice is to include it in the report, which is the case for the UB, UAB, UPC and UPF. The results report often contains a section on financial resources. Generally, the information provided is not complete: it tends to include data on investment in information resources, but not investment in staff. Consequently, it does not provide a complete overview of expenditure and income.

Although Organisation charts (5, j) are provided on the websites of six libraries (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdL and URV), there are clear differences between them. The organisation chart of the UB shows how the central services are organised and includes the management team with its different areas of action. Similar organisation charts are provided by the URV, which includes subunits, and the UdL, which shows the relation with the rector's team. Unlike these two examples, the organisation chart of the UPF illustrates the structure of the Services, Technology and Information Resources Area, which covers the Library, Computing Services and the University Community Assistance Service. However, this chart does not depict the composition of each specific library. The UPC includes faculty and campus libraries, as well as the libraries of affiliated centres. Finally, the organisation chart of the UAB is divided into the main subject area units, with criteria of territoriality.

Only two libraries (UB and UAB) provide a Policy or programme of collection management (4, h) for their users. The number is surprisingly low, as information resources are a key element in any information service. However, it is extremely likely that other libraries have drawn up such policies or programmes. It may be impossible to consult them

because they are given a different name, or are not available on the website. The UdG and UPF libraries include a specific section on donations as the only information on the collection management policy.

Only two libraries (UAB and UPF) include the indicator Members of the library committee (2, c), although this information is provided under different headings. In the UAB, it is under the Regulations of the Library Service, while in the UPF it is in the subsection Committees, under the heading Get to know us.

Another indicator that did not appear on many webpages was satisfaction surveys (6, m). Surveys were only published by three libraries in the sample (UAB, UB and UPC). In its section on Quality, the UAB included annual reports with the results of all libraries for 2016, along with a summary and computer graphics. Under the heading Strategy and quality, the UB provides general results for the last three years, divided into groups of users. Under the tab Get to know us, the UPC presents the results broken down by centre, with the most recent for academic year 2014–2015. Satisfaction surveys must be administered to apply a quality programme, so other libraries are certain to undertake them, even though the results are not available online.

Three libraries state that they hold quality certificates (6, o). The UB, for example, has the EFQM 400 Seal of Excellence (2016). The UAB and the URV have received ISO 9001 certification: the UAB in the 2008 and 2015 versions, and the URV in the 2000 and 2008 versions. The UPC library service only mentions its participation in the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain's quality assurance process in 2004 and 2005.

The two indicators that were found least frequently on the websites were Tendered contracts and calls (7, q) and Management indicators (scorecard) (6, l). The presence of both these indicators was negligible, either due to a lack of information or because the information was very hard to find. Only the UB includes information on contracts in its section Information resources. It was even harder to find data on the balanced scorecard, which the UPF did have in the past. Although the use of management indicators has become widespread, as shown in some reports of activities, these indicators are not associated with a steering or control tool like the scorecard. However, the UAB and the UPC do have a series of management indicators in different sections, such as strategic planning, staff or publications, and present data for 2016, and for 2015 and 2014 (Table II).

#### **4. Correspondence between the transparency of the universities and that of their respective libraries**

According to the latest edition of "Examen de transparencia: informe de transparencia voluntaria en las web de las universidades españolas (Examining transparency: a report on voluntary transparency on the websites of Spanish universities)" by the FCyT (2017), which was used as a reference for this study, five out of the seven Catalan public universities that are members of the CSUC have achieved the category of transparent (UPF, UAB, UPC, URV and UdL). They are in this category because their websites contain the over 20 established indicators (quantitative criterion), including those on financial status and an external audit report (qualitative criterion). Meanwhile, the UB and the UdG are considered translucent. The UB provides information on over 20 indicators, but does not meet the qualitative criterion that is considered key. The UdG does not reach the level of over 20 indicators. With respect to private universities: the UVic-Central University of Catalonia is considered transparent, the UOC translucent, and the URL opaque.

As Pacios highlighted in relation to the Madroño Consortium, relevant information associated with the transparency of libraries that are CSUC members is quite hard to find, because none of the university libraries have a specific section on this subject. Information is distributed at various links and under various headings. The most common headings are "Get to know us" and "Get to know the library" (UB, UAB, UPC and UPF). This section

**Table II.**  
Percentage of  
indicators found on  
the webpages of  
libraries that are  
CSUC members

Information area	Indicator	Libraries	Percentage
Purpose of the service and objectives	Definition of the mission	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, URV, UdL	60
	Strategic plan	UB, UAB, UPC, UdG, UdL	50
Governing bodies and operation regulations	Members of the library committee	UAB, UPF	20
	Regulations	UB, UAB, UPC, UdG, UdL, UPF, URV	70
	Specific regulations for services	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, URV, UVic	80
	Charter of users' rights and responsibilities	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, URV	70
Service offered	Service charter	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdL, URV, UVic	70
Information resources	Networks with which the library works	UB, UAB	20
	Institutional policy of open access	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, URV, UOC	80
Staff	Organisation chart	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdL, URV	60
	Staff directory	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdL, URV, UVic-C, UOC, URL,	90
Results	Management indicators (scorecard)		0
	Satisfaction surveys	UB, UAB, UPC	30
	Annual report	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, UOC	70
Financial information	Awards and prizes	UB, UAB, URV	30
	Budget	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF	40
Membership of networks	Tendered contracts and calls	UB	10
	Networks with which the library works	UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, UVic-C, UOC	80

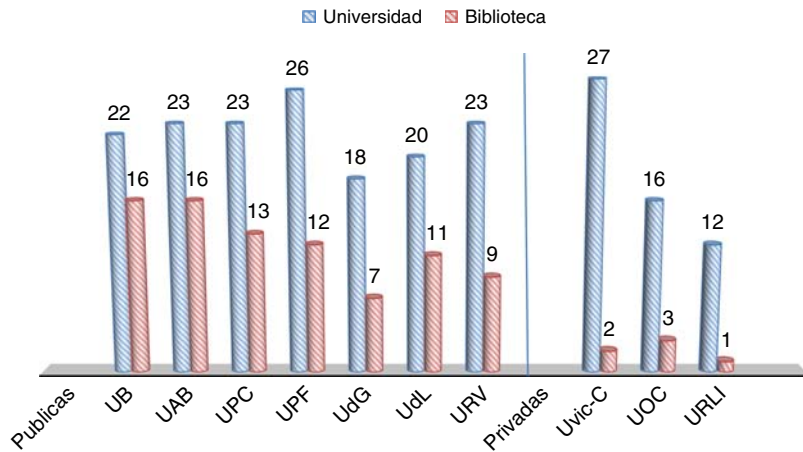
is divided into subsections, each of which includes information on the following respectively: Regulations, Service Charter, Strategy and Quality, among others. The UdL has a similar structure under the heading "Library". The URV distributes the information between "What is the CRAI?" and "Commitments", so the difficulty is even greater in this case. The "General information" section of the UdG library includes the regulations, commitments, rights and responsibilities of users. Unlike the above institutions, the UOC, UVic and URL provide very little information on transparency in the general information section and in the rest of the website.

From a comparison of the libraries' values for transparency and those of their respective institutions, we can conclude that:

- The two libraries in the best position (UB and UAB) achieved the same score of 16 out of a potential 18 indicators, so both universities were considered transparent.
- In the Pacios study, levels of transparency are very similar in universities and their libraries. However, in Catalonia there is a notable difference between these levels. The university's culture of transparency is not reflected in that of the library. As shown in Figure 1, the most extreme cases are those of the UPF, the URV and UVic-Universitat Central de Catalunya, with differences in values for the university and the library ranging from 14 to 25 points. The most surprising case is that of the UVic-Universitat Central de Catalunya. The UVic is the most transparent Catalan university, with 27 points, and is the best ranked Spanish private university, but its library is among the least transparent, with only 2 points, which means it is classified as opaque.



**Figure 1.**  
Comparison of the transparency of the universities (FCyT Report 2016) and their libraries



## 5. Conclusions

We can draw the following conclusions from the above:

- All the public university libraries provide information on their organisational model to justify their management. However, this information is incomplete, and the way it is displayed on the website differs in each case.
- The university libraries under study have probably drawn up documents associated with the indicators established by Pacios. However, they have not considered it necessary to disseminate this information. Another possibility is that the location on the website does not correspond with the search parameters.
- Based on the results, we can establish three groups of libraries depending on the number of indicators found on the website. Using the terminology in the FCyT report, and according to the score obtained in each case, we differentiated between: a first transparent group that includes libraries with values in the range of 18 to 11 (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF and UdL); a second “translucid” group with a score between 10 and 5, comprised of the two smaller universities outside the suburbs of Barcelona (UdG and URV); and a third “opaque” group of libraries that obtained a score of less than 4 because they publish hardly any information that justifies their management or provides knowledge on how they organise the service. Consequently, these libraries occupy the last places in the ranking. All of them belong to private universities (UVic-Universitat Central de Catalunya, URL and UOC).
- The dispersion of information associated with the indicators under study meant that many hyperdocuments needed to be consulted, which diminished visibility and recovery. Considering that the font size was sometimes small and the contrast weak, the documents can be classed as difficult to access.
- In general, the most significant data are presented as an ordered summary with an attractive format. Summaries help to compare the progress of libraries, and tend to focus on the number of visitors, the journals available for consultation and the monographs purchased. They may also include computer graphics, summaries in figures, or short video clips. However, they are not always sufficiently clear, and do not always facilitate an assessment of use, the impact of the library and returns on investment.

- The information that is disseminated is not always valid. For example, some reports are dated academic year 2010–2011. We found references to assessment processes undertaken in academic year 2005–2006, either because subsequent evaluations were not carried out, or because the results have not been disseminated.
- Indicators that were present in all libraries' websites were those relating to staff (organisation chart and staff directory), governing bodies, location of premises and operation regulations, including general regulations and specific regulations for services.
- Several areas could be better represented on the websites. These include the purpose of the service, and more specifically the definition of the mission. In some cases, there were problems with formulation. Little information was available on strategic plans, which are, as we know, an essential management tool for progress of an organisation.
- Although their use is widespread, the presence of indicators relating to results was the lowest. On the websites under study, no scorecards showed key areas of the library's results, although some examples of indicators were identified. Only one library included data on its tender contracts and calls, which are another aspect of financial information.
- Of the four indicators proposed in the results area, only one, publication of a report, was found in almost all cases. Very few budgets can be consulted. Those that are available are difficult to access as they are not under the specific heading of "Budget", but form a part of the report on the service. The information they provide is not complete, as it is focussed on investment in information resources, with a high level of detail depending on the type. However, relevant information on staff costs is not provided, which means it is impossible to determine the total cost of the library service.
- Data are lacking on the area of information resources and results. In terms of the former, the prominent position on the websites of the institutional policy of open access was considered positive. CSUC membership has undoubtedly encouraged dissemination of this information and descriptions of the kinds of loan on offer.

## 6. Recommendations

It is clear that a certain contradiction exists between one of the main functions of a university library – to provide quality information for users – and the information that libraries disseminate about their own operation. In many cases, such information is out of date or organised according to criteria that are hard to understand. From all that has been considered above, it is evident that libraries need to revise the quantity, quality and currentness of the information they offer users on their website. For this reason, we present the following recommendations to help libraries achieve a greater degree of transparency:

- The information that university library websites offer on their organisational model is incomplete and difficult to visualise. Users should be able to access this information more easily and the libraries should, therefore, reconsider its inclusion and/or location with parameters that make it easier to find.
- Indicators associated with results and financial information should be increased and improved, as they reveal the performance of management and the distribution of financial resources. It is important to disseminate the results of user satisfaction surveys, as these are the main tool for assessing libraries' actions, and therefore, their quality.

- Given the intensive use of social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) by libraries as a means of communication with users and a way to market their products and/or services, we promote their use as an ideal channel for disseminating data relating to their management model. The accessibility of social media justifies their use by libraries.
- Libraries should publish their policy of collection management to reveal how a collection develops, and the criteria for accepting donations or removing works should be described.

Last of all, we should stress the fact that, like all services and entities funded with public money, public libraries must inform citizens of the principles that govern their management and the results obtained.

### Notes

1. We included the libraries of both public and private universities. Although private universities are not obliged by law to meet the precepts of transparency, we considered that their inclusion helped to determine the current situation.
2. There is no agreement on whether the UOC is a public or private university. The Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency classifies it as a “Distance” university. The FCyT considers that it is private.
3. The study does not analyse the libraries of Universitat Abad Oliva or Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, as they are not CSUC members.
4. CRAI UB (<http://crai.ub.edu/en>); Servei de Biblioteques UAB ([www.uab.cat/biblioteques/](http://www.uab.cat/biblioteques/)); Bibliotècnica UPC (<http://bibliotecnica.upc.edu/info/index>); Biblioteca i Informàtica – CRAI UPF ([www.upf.edu/bibtic/](http://www.upf.edu/bibtic/)); Biblioteca UdG ([www2.udg.edu/biblioteca/Inici/tabid/22375/language/ca-ES/Default.aspx](http://www2.udg.edu/biblioteca/Inici/tabid/22375/language/ca-ES/Default.aspx)); Biblioteca i Documentació UdL (<http://bid.udl.cat/ca/>); CRAI URV ([www.urv.cat/ca/vida-campus/serveis/crai/](http://www.urv.cat/ca/vida-campus/serveis/crai/)); Biblioteca UVic-UCC ([www.uvic.cat/biblioteca/](http://www.uvic.cat/biblioteca/)); Biblioteca UOC (<http://biblioteca.uoc.edu/>); Biblioteques URL ([www.url.edu/serveis/biblioteques/](http://www.url.edu/serveis/biblioteques/)).
5. This is the consortium loan service offered by CSUC libraries, available at: [www.csuc.cat/es/bibliotecas-cbuc/prestamo-consorciado-pica/el-prestamo-consorciado-puc](http://www.csuc.cat/es/bibliotecas-cbuc/prestamo-consorciado-pica/el-prestamo-consorciado-puc) (accessed 2 December 2017).
6. “La Biblioteca en un minut”, available at: [www2.udg.edu/biblioteca/Inici/tabid/22375/language/ca-ES/Default.aspx](http://www2.udg.edu/biblioteca/Inici/tabid/22375/language/ca-ES/Default.aspx) (accessed 2 December 2017).
7. Open access at the UOC, available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhyS7NN8nVc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhyS7NN8nVc) (accessed 7 December 2017).

### References

- Codina Bonilla, L. (2000), “Evaluación de recursos digitales en línea: conceptos, indicadores y métodos”, *Revista española de documentación científica*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 9-44.
- Consorci de Serveis Universitaris de Catalunya (2013), CSUC, available at: [www.csuc.cat/en/libraries](http://www.csuc.cat/en/libraries) (accessed 2 December 2017).
- IFLA (2008), “IFLA manifiesto on transparency, good governance and freedom for corruption”, available at: [www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-manifiesto-on-transparency-good-governance-and-freedom-from-corruption](http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-manifiesto-on-transparency-good-governance-and-freedom-from-corruption) (accessed 2 December 2017).
- Jiménez Piano, M. and Ortiz-Repiso Jiménez, V. (2007), *Evaluación y calidad de sedes web*, Trea, Madrid.
- Martin Cavanna, J. and Barrio, E. (2016), *Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia voluntaria en las web de las Universidades españolas 2016*, Fundación Compromiso y Transparencia, Madrid, available at: [www.compromisoytransparencia.com/conocimientos/informes/](http://www.compromisoytransparencia.com/conocimientos/informes/) (accessed 11 December 2017).

- 
- Moreno-Sardà, A., Molina-Rodríguez-Navas, P. and Simelio-Solà, N. (2017), "Impacto de la legislación sobre transparencia en la información publicada por las administraciones locales", *El profesional de la información*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 370-380, available at: <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2017.may.03> (accessed 11 December 2017).
- Pacios Lozano, A.R. (2016), "Universidades transparentes con bibliotecas transparentes", *Investigación Bibliotecológica*, Vol. 30 No. 70, pp. 105-128, available at: [www.elsevier.es/es-revista-investigacion-bibliotecologica-archivonomia-bibliotecologia-e-117-articulo-universidades-transparentes-con-bibliotecas-transparentes-S0187358X16300508](http://www.elsevier.es/es-revista-investigacion-bibliotecologica-archivonomia-bibliotecologia-e-117-articulo-universidades-transparentes-con-bibliotecas-transparentes-S0187358X16300508) (accessed 11 December 2017).
- REBIUN (2011), "III Plan estratégico de Rebiun 2020", available at: [www.rebiun.org/queesrebiun/Documents/III\\_Plan%20Estrategico\\_REBIUN.pdf](http://www.rebiun.org/queesrebiun/Documents/III_Plan%20Estrategico_REBIUN.pdf) (accessed 11 December 2017).
- Uvalle Berrones, R. (2016), "Fundamentos de la transparencia en la sociedad contemporánea", *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias políticas y sociales*, Vol. LXI No. 226, pp. 199-220, available at: [www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=42144001008](http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=42144001008) (accessed 11 December 2017).

### Further reading

- Burke, S.K. (2016), "Public library administration: transparency on the website", *Library Quarterly*, Vol. 86 No. 4, pp. 449-467.
- Catalunya (2014), "Llei 19/2014, del 29 de desembre, de transparència, accés a la informació pública i bon govern", available at: [http://portaljuridic.gencat.cat/ca/pjur\\_ocults/pjur\\_resultats\\_fitxa?action=fitxa&mode=single&documentId=680124&language=ca\\_ES](http://portaljuridic.gencat.cat/ca/pjur_ocults/pjur_resultats_fitxa?action=fitxa&mode=single&documentId=680124&language=ca_ES) (accessed 2 December 2017).
- Lakos, A. and Phipps, S. (2004), "Creating a culture of assessment: a catalyst for organizational change", *Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 345-361.

### Corresponding author

Carina Rey Martin can be contacted at: [carina.rey@ub.edu](mailto:carina.rey@ub.edu)