

Knowledge in the XXI Century: The role of the Library and Information Science

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One problem = One Opportunity?

- The **opportunity**: to present a simple proposal for what might be a way to explain what kind of value provide Library and Information Science to our societies.
- The **problem**:
 - At least in our country, but I think it is an international problem, our field of study and career both are misunderstood: apparently, nobody, except us, understand what we do.
 - And, I fear that we also are underestimated: it seems that society does not give much importance to what we do.

Universal Access to all Knowledge

- What is the ultimate purpose of LIS?
- One possible answer:
 - The promotion of universal access to all knowledge motivates many of the best efforts of our field, both professionally and academically
- Examples:
 - Public networks of libraries
 - University libraries
 - OPACs
- And the very special one: Open Access initiative

Reducing inequality

- Is possible to go beyond the idea of diffusion of knowledge?
- Diffusion of Knowledge is very good, but for what?
- Piketty answer: dissemination of knowledge is a **main factor** to reduce **inequality**...

Thomas Piketty. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press, 2014

Amazon [link](#)

Quotes from Thomas Piketty:

- “The main forces for convergence [reduction of inequalities] are the **diffusion of knowledge** and investment in training and skills” (...)
- “**Knowledge** and skill **diffusion** is the key to overall productivity growth as well as the reduction of inequality both within and between countries”
- “Over a long period of time, the main force in favour of greater equality has been the **diffusion of knowledge** and skills”.

One possible agenda for Information Systems studies

- **Open Access** initiative: preservation, findability, cataloguing, social implications, etc.
- **Digital humanities**: information retrieval, metadata, knowledge representation
- **New roles for University Libraries** in the support of competitive research: databases, repositories, monitoring, alert services,
- **Analysis and monitoring** of search engines on the web and other social web involved with de social use and retrieval of information

Conclusion - 1

- The views of economists Piketty can be useful to help LIS prove the value of our business and to present to society the deep meaning of our role in society

Conclusion - 2

- The "classic" developments of LIS as university libraries, and other can be interpreted as ways **to fight inequality** and therefore as ways **to promote social cohesion** and to promote **more integrated and harmonious societies**
- This point of view can drive new research and a kind of research more involved with society.

Conclusion – (and) 3

- Also, new developments related to the dissemination of knowledge, such as Digital Humanities, academic repositories and the semantic web can benefit very much from Information Science

Research questions - 1

- If in the future we dream of a world where Open Access is the **natural form of publishing scientific content**, can we imagine an **Open Access initiative**, but in relation to bibliographical databases?
- So, how do products such as **Web of Science** or **Scopus** fit in a possible future dominated by an Open Access context?
- Is it **feasible** to have a majority of academic journals as Open Access products, with a system of **closed** (commercial) databases?

Research questions - 2

- Can we think about futures lines of research attempting **to unite** aspects of the **economy of equality** with **Library and Information Science** issues?
- This point of view (diffusion of knowledge as a main factor against inequality) can drive new research; and a **kind of research more involved with society?**