Customization and Personalization of Academic Library Portals in Israel / Rivka Greenberg

Abstract

This research investigates customization and personalization of library portals and studies the opinions of library professionals in university libraries about adding the personal library portal as part of the library services, its characteristics, and application.

The literature survey discussed some case studies of academic library portals on which the personal portal was implemented. The literature survey also described the advantages, disadvantages, content marketing processes, and future developments of such personalized portals.

The main research questions were 1. Will the library personal portal can be integrated to the Israeli universities libraries portals? 2. What will be the content of the personal portal, how will it be created and updated?

The research population included approx. 150 professional libraries among the Israeli universities' library management staff. The methodology was a survey especially designed for this research, based on the literature review. The questionnaire was distributed through the research web site <u>http://haifa.ac.il/www/mlthesis</u>. The questionnaire was distributed three times during August – September 2006, by email. One hundred and one questionnaires were returned (about 67% of the total potential research population).

It was shown that the research population supported the personal library portal as part of their libraries' portal. The personal portal's target audience will be the academic staff and the research students. The main results are; the content of the personal portal will be mainly library resources and services. The creation of the portal will be done only for the users who will ask to have it. The customization will be done by the user. The system will update the data automatically. No private data will be gathered to avoid privacy issues. The users will choose the interface, the terms of the content items will be very simple and popular and the interface will be bilingual Hebrew – English.

The main conclusion of the research is the fact that the service will be implemented only for the academic staff and research students. The marketing and incorporation of the service will aim only this homogenic targeted audience. This fact can contribute to the success of the personal portal.

The research recommendation is to include the library personal portal as part as the university library portal' research services. The service will match the library's information resources with the research needs of each individual and it will make the library much more relevant and important to the academic research community in Israel.

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