Characterization of the Preferred Personalization model for Digital Library Serving Nursing School Students

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Abstract

Background: The E-learning as well as the Internet tools for learning have long ago become the daily bread of the technological knowledge revolution in the very process of which we find ourselves, that is going to change the main accumulation means of human knowledge from paper to computer bytes. This means two things: first, the accumulation of knowledge procedure and secondly, the ability to transfer it from place to place at light speed. The digital library, equivalent and heir of the traditional library, accumulates the human knowledge through electronic means, thus constituting a conceptual change. No more visual means for knowledge saving like papers or clayware but technological means that demand conversion from the visual means and enable a renewed organization and processing for knowledge presentation.

The ability to transfer information from place to place is a revolution itself whose meaning is that any information is available at any time and place and to every person, immediately after it has been created. It makes it possible also to uniformly create collaboration of thousand of information sources, distributed all over the world, just by pushing a button. Another important advantage of the digital library is the virtual accessibility to all kinds of stored items, not only the textual ones but also the ones from vocal, video, stills and imaging origin. The multiplicity of items demands a high level of performance ability as regards various operations of retrieving and adding information (Rashty, 1997). The digital library is making its first steps and there are still many research questions, who need to be resolved before the digital library standards are established, that will be accepted by the different communities who deal with the research of the digital library.

Research questions: The study tried to find a possible solution to one of the most important research questions of the digital library regarding the information studies approach, to which no accepted answer has been given yet. The question is how to

construct efficiently and comfortably a digital library, with a personal profile to every user, that will allow to every user to receive personally adapted information. The process of personally adapted information to each user is called in the in the professional language: personalization.

Research value: The study examined a field of information studies research that has been poorly investigated and its importance as future research area is pointed out in many research works. The personalization in itself has been much investigated but almost no examination of the information studies aspect of the personalization process in the digital library has been done and especially no examination of the potential contribution to the process of the virtual community of practice.

Research objectives: examination of the various aspects of the personalization of digital library content and interface. The examination was done by comparison of the users' satisfaction from the main three research groups in the field of digital library personalization. The study compared the satisfaction of nursing digital library users from the three field leading models: direct personalization, indirect personalization and the community of practice based personalization.

Research methods: The study was conducted by combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative part of the study was conducted on a limited basis. Therefore the findings are non significance in themselves. They only serve as an addition to corroborate the quantitative research. Each of the three models was studied by a separate group of participants. A separate questionnaire was distributed in each group, in order to study the level of satisfaction from the model. The group of the direct personalization was consisted of 114 participants, the second group, which studied indirect personalization, was consisted of 126 participants and the third group, which studied the community of practice based personalization, was consisted of 112 participants. Furthermore 30 Interviews was conducted with participants from the study population. The participants were classified, according to their experience wit the three different models, to three equal groups. Each one was consisted of ten participants and dealt with different model, allowing conducting three different half constructed interviews. One for each model.

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Main findings: Hypothesis A was not verified. There was much satisfaction of direct personalization but also the service giver's quality is in direct connection to the satisfaction he causes. This fact makes us doubt how real is the user's satisfaction of the model beyond the reduced population's research.

Hypothesis B was partially verified. There was only partial satisfaction of the indirect personalization model and reservation about the technological factor virtues to rightly diagnose the user's needs and the violation of the user's right to privacy.

Hypothesis C, D and E were verified. There was satisfaction among the users of this personalization model and at the same time of the social dynamics the community as basis to the personalization and the socio-professional development of the community members.

To summarize we can say that the preferred model for the digital library in the user's view is the model based on the community of practice, which enables fecundation enrichment of the information for the community members, using advanced technological tools.

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