

„DELICIS: Distance Education for Librarians: Creating an Information-Competent Society”

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Abstract

The 2 year project DELICIS (Distance Education for Librarians: Creating an Information-Competent Society), initiated by Vilnius University (Lithuania) and financed by Leonardo da Vinci Programme, is designed to provide long distance learning services in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ITC) for librarians and information professionals from Lithuania and Latvia. The detailed project has 10 international partners, including universities, libraries and enterprises from various Scandinavian, Eastern, Central and Mediterranean European regions.

Duration of the project: 24 months

Starting date: December, 2000

Ending date: November, 2002

Promoter: Vilnius University, Faculty of Communication, Lithuania

Partners: Tallinn Pedagogical University, Estonia; ALFA D. ANAPTIXIAKI O.E., Grecia; Western Greece and Epirus U.E.T.P., Greece; Aarhus County Library, Denmark; Vilnius County Public Library, Lithuania; University of Latvia, Faculty of Philology, Department of Library and Information Science, Centre of Continuing Education of Library Professionals, Letonia; Riga Central Library, Latvia; Economic Software Systems Int'l SRL, Romania; University of Brighton, School of Information Management, England.

In the year 2000 Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University (Lithuania) initiated the 2-year-duration project „DELICIS: Distance Education for Librarians: Creating an Information-Competent Society” which was financed by EC Leonardo Da Vinci programme. The idea of the project emerged as a response to modern man's desire to adapt to the demands of the new millennium, when he is confronted with information flood, which he must keep up with. The exigencies are, we might say, ever bigger, considering the fact that we are dealing with librarians, the main pawns in educationally counseling the final users of this information. As a matter of fact, the project promoter considers that one cannot live this age of information without making full use of the opportunities it bears. The main project objective consists of devising a distance-learning programme in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ITC), as an active component of lifelong learning for *library and information professionals* in libraries and Informatics in Lithuania and Latvia.

Therefore, the promoter and partners wish to contribute, by means of this project, to the vocational training of the librarians, by offering them the possibility of acquiring skills which are necessary in ICT fields, on the background of an ever growing employment of new information technologies, both in professional and daily life. In this respect, we consider that *e-learning* is the best solution to acquiring a solid education, in the ICT field, for librarians, who are empowered to disseminate ICT competencies at local level, thus settling the bases of the understructure of an Information Society.

The project addresses the need for *retraining of library and information professionals* according to the new requirements of modern society to information services especially in relation to the ever-increasing use of new ICT in professional as well as everyday life. This requires a complex of new skills and services. The demand for information literacy, Internet and ICT training is particularly tremendous in the Baltic region, as well as in other parts of the world. Survey investigated the continuous education needs among all types of libraries in Lithuania. *From 900 respondents, more than 75% indicated ICT and Internet education as the most needed.* The same situation is in Latvia. Traditional means of training (courses, lectures, workshops, etc.) even under newly organized continuous education structures are unable to deal with the needs for training and retraining in a required scope and pace.

The project has a broad partnership of ten institutions (3 universities, 4 public libraries, 2 private enterprises, and one university-enterprise), and it covers a large geographic area: Scandinavia (Denmark), Eastern Europe (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), Central Europe (Romania), and the Mediterranean region (Greece). Thus, the project is truly international and intercultural in its nature, which is a huge advantage, considering the dissemination market and also a challenge in respect to project management

Specific *aims* of the project are the following:

1. To improve the quality of continuing training for library professionals by introducing development of ICT skills, which are the strongest requirements of an information society and the labor market;
2. To improve access to continuing education and training for library professionals by exploiting the potential of ICT,
3. To promote flexibility of continuing training for library professionals with innovative learning practices - distance learning which enables promotion of lifelong learning practices with regard to those with restricted possibilities of learning because of age, distance, disability, etc.
4. To create the trans-national dimension of the project, through trans-national co-operation during development of the product and dissemination of project results and experiences.

The project objective will be realized by adaptation of 3 ICT-centered distance courses "Basic Internet", "Advanced Internet" and "WebPages Design" targeted specifically at library professionals and by incorporating these courses into continuing education programmes in Lithuania and Latvia. Courses are adapted from the Danish analogue provided by Aarhus County Library (DK).

Activities

1. Adaptation of the product

Duration: January 1 - June 30, 2001;

1. The main aim of the work-package - to adapt 3 Danish distance education courses in ICT competencies for library professionals "Internet for Beginners", "Advanced Internet" and "Web page design" provided by Aarhus County Library (DK) and tailored specifically to the needs of library professionals in Lithuania and Latvia.

2. Transfer of the content - adaptation of the courses

Duration: April 15 - June 30, 2001;

3. Transfer of knowledge and experience:

- Through training session for Lithuanian and Latvian library and academic staff involved in the adaptation of the product.

-Dissemination of initial project information: through publications in Lithuanian and Latvian professional press, - through the web site in English language developed by ESSI (RO).

-II. Testing and evaluation of the product

Duration: July 1 - August 30, 2001;

1. Transfer of knowledge and experience through training session for the staff of Vilnius County Library (LT) and Riga Central Library (LV) involved in the trial of the product.

2. Testing of the product will be realized through the following activities:

2.1. Distance studies through Internet of three ICT competence courses performed by staff members of Vilnius County Library (LT) and Riga Central Library (LV).

3. Evaluation of the product will be realized through the following activities:

3.1. Evaluation reports.

3.2. Analysis of the reports

Constant evaluation and updating

III. Dissemination of the project product and results

Duration: September 1, 2001 - December 31, 2002 (16 months).

-through demonstration and dissemination seminars at national as well as international levels, via different professional channels of all project partners.

-Publications in professional press provided by different partners.

-Booklet published in English, Lithuanian and Latvian- Web site published in English, Lithuanian and Latvian.

Final results:

- there will be adapted three distance education courses aimed at ICT training for library and information professionals in Lithuania and Latvia enabling them to acquire or upgrade ICT competencies at distance, - courses will be integrated into continuing education programme for library professionals,

- courses will be published on the net thus ensuring its wide accessibility and presence on the world-wide market,

- extensive market will be created by diverse means of dissemination for the distribution and commercialization of the product,

- web-site will be created presenting project results and experiences for a world-wide audience in English, Lithuanian and Latvian languages,

- booklet will be published presenting project results and product characteristics in English, Lithuanian and Latvian languages,

- Lithuanian and Latvian academic staff members will get the experience, knowledge and skills necessary to develop full distance education curricula for library and information professionals,

- VU FC (LT) and University of Latvia (LV) will acquire possibility to join European and even world-wide network of distance education through diverse dissemination and demonstration activities.

Evaluation of the product will be realized by following activities:

Evaluation reports will be provided by staff members of the libraries involved in the trial of the product, and at the end of the study period on their experiences, they will come with recommendations for improvement.

Specific aim of the activity is to provide product adapters with the feedback about the quality of the product; it's suitability to the professional needs of project target group, possible defects and necessary improvements. Analysis of the reports will be made and the product will be updated according to evaluation analysis and suggestions. Specific aim of the activity is to improve the product according to recommendations of the representatives of the project target group and to ensure its quality before it has passed into active use. Constant evaluation and update will be performed during the whole 2nd phase according to the feedback and remarks provided by trainees. Specific aim of the activity is to encourage the feedback of the trainees concerning the defects of distance education material and to train teachers to engender adequate remarks and propositions of trainees by updating material as soon as possible thus ensuring its quality control.

Dissemination

Dissemination of the project product and experiences will be carried out during the whole process of project implementation through the following channels and activities:

1. dissemination of information about the project and its product and demonstration seminars for Lithuanian and Latvian academic and library community,

2. oral presentations (using MS PowerPoint) at continuing education courses in Vilnius and Riga,

3. presentations of project activities and progress in professional associations at national and international level,

4. informing a wide audience about the project and its product sending press releases to the press, radio and TV,

5. publications in Latvian and Lithuanian professional press,

6. publishing of the booklet in Lithuanian, Latvian and English languages,

7. dissemination of project experiences through activities of partner institutions: in the academic circles on national and European level, in the library network, in the academic circles at the European level through the membership and activities.