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Which librarians for tomorrow ?

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Which librarians for tomorrow?

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Context

With full text, researchers now have a fast and direct access.

Information is no more material being and we have more and more open archives

So We can conclude that researchers become autonomous !!!

From hierarchy, librarians have less work

So, are librarians still necessary?

Necessity for librarian to have better visibility

So the question is : Which skills for tomorrow?

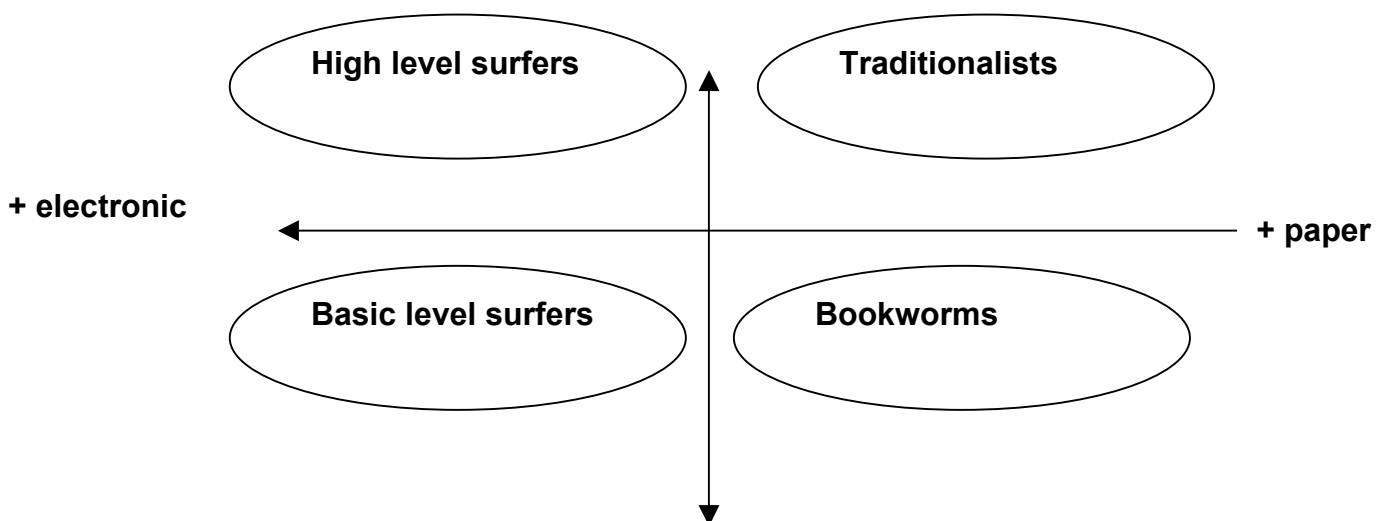
1. Public and tools evolution

Researchers and engineers' attitudes depend on:

- Nature and fields of their work
- Their motivation
- Their level of autonomy
- Current research awareness frequency
- Their bibliographic organization
- Skills and experience with new research tools

Typology of e-journal users

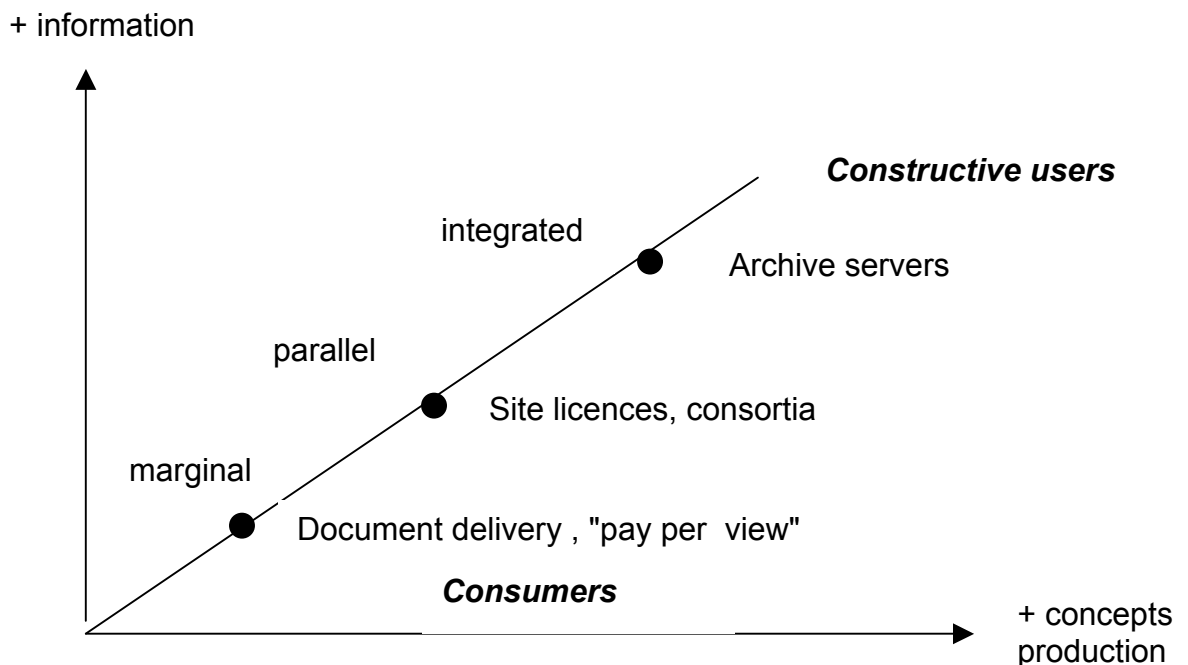
Environments that are conducive to the use of
electronic journals



Environments that are not conducive to the
use of electronic journals

This chart illustrates what we say before, it concerns use of electronic journals, we have four kind of users and we see the importance of the environment. Somebody who is bookworm can become traditionalist if the environment is conducive and a basic level surfer can become high level surfer. So our librarian work will be to bring a bookworm to become a basic level surfer for example.

Different levels of electronic journal consumption



As you can see on this graph, more the researcher produces concepts, more he needs information. So the constructive user integrated information in his research work. For example, he uploads their papers in an open archives server.

We can almost wonder if constructive users will need our help !

Anyway, he will not have the same needs than a consumer user and one of the difficulties of our job is to answer to all these different users. Needs are so different !!

Researchers' needs are :

- Time saving
- Sorted, selected and digested information
- An unique access point (a portal) – less knowledge scattering – a better managed and controlled multitude of information sources
- Packaging information in the way the customer needs it
- New training tools
- Methodological assistance
- Help with the development of the research results

Tools also change :

- Content management system (CMS)
- Publication formats : html, wml, svg....
- E learning – Course management system
-

2. Job change

First an assessment :

Some traditional activities decrease:

- Cataloguing, classification and circulation
- Information retrieval on server databases like Dialog
- Decrease of ill requests...

Other activities increase:

- Users training
- Information management support
- Bibliometrics
- Advice to authors for electronic publishing (copyright/file format/metadata)
- Access to electronic journals – Negotiate licences

In our job, **management** constitute a big part of it:

- Arrival in force of economy in this sector (department performance, profitability, quality...)
- Political and negotiation skills
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to deliver results
- Team management : build a balanced team

We need also **marketing skills**, we must attract users and how attract them?

Is it necessary to put a coffee machine in libraries?

How to attract our users?

- Informal training around a "croissant"
- Activities like " book exchange"....

Customer focus is also essential:

- Ensure focus that services are relevant and meet information needs
- How is the service perceived in the organisation?
- Maintain a good awareness of how people view their services

It is difficult to have performance indicator in our job. How can we measure success?

What will be the place of librarians in a research centre?

Something is sure : our services must provide adding value

Upstream

- Product tests and awareness of technology
- Selection and validation of information
- Sharing of resources between public institutions/inter-organizational negotiations
- Single catalogue of all libraries in a specific network or in an area
- Virtual libraries : personalised services in " My library" like personal list of shortcuts
- Designing web pages

Downstream

- High levels of training
- Follow scientific production –speak with research teams
- Draw up electronic publishing instructions for authors
- Concerning open archives
 - o Metadata choice and description
 - o Open archives promotion and valorisation
 - o Durability of institution eprint archives

An assessment : there are less and less users in libraries, we must know that 28% of full text consultation take place outside office hours.

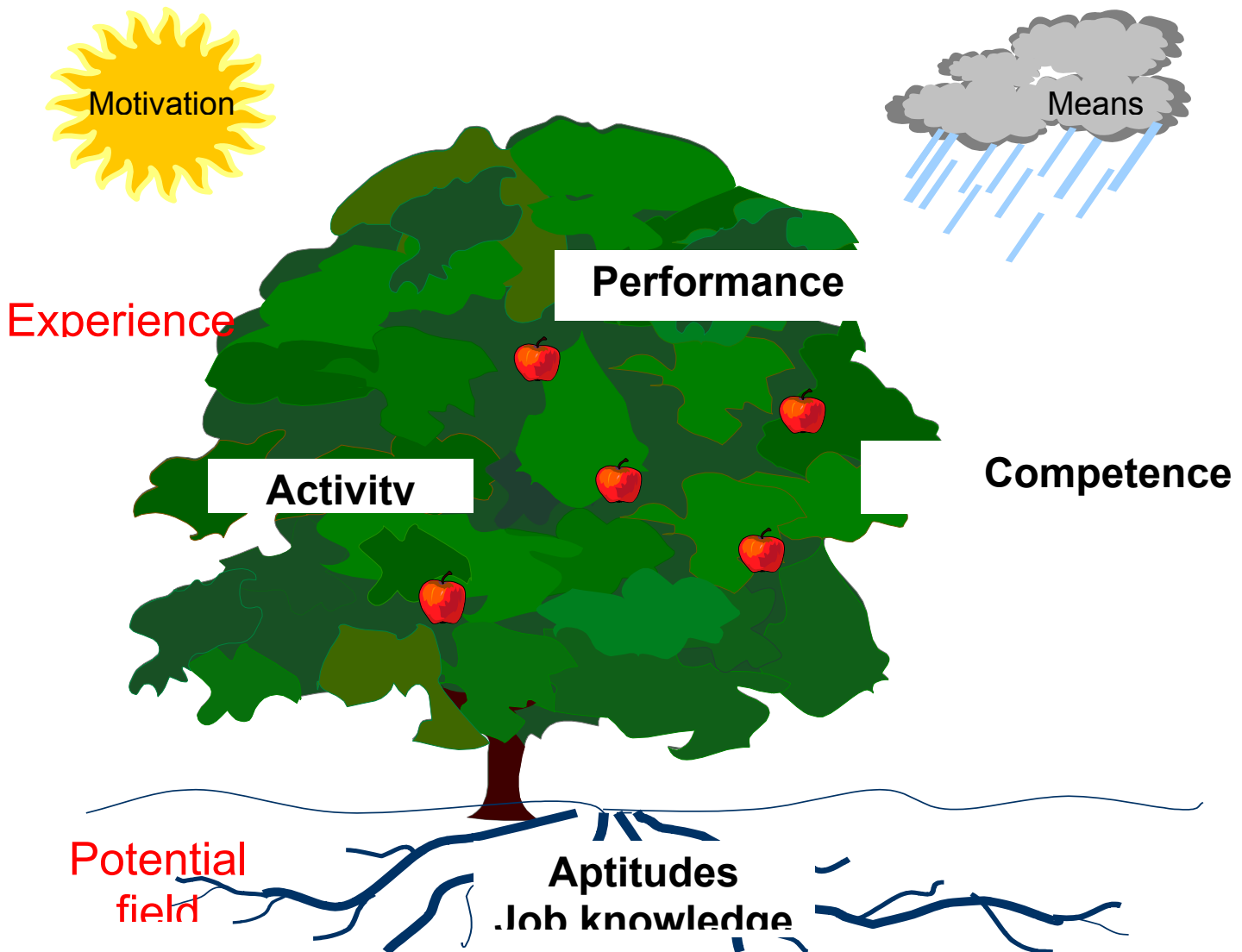
- Library job evolve and turn towards advise and information organisation
- We must win back researcher : trainings, help to publish...
- Librarian becomes a partner in research teams
- Librarian is now an electronic resources expert

Difficulties of our job are:

- Striking the balance between human and virtual resources
 - o Centralization of resources
 - o User proximity
- Preservation problems
 - o Obsolescence of hardware and software

3. Adequation with our competences

Competence – What is it?

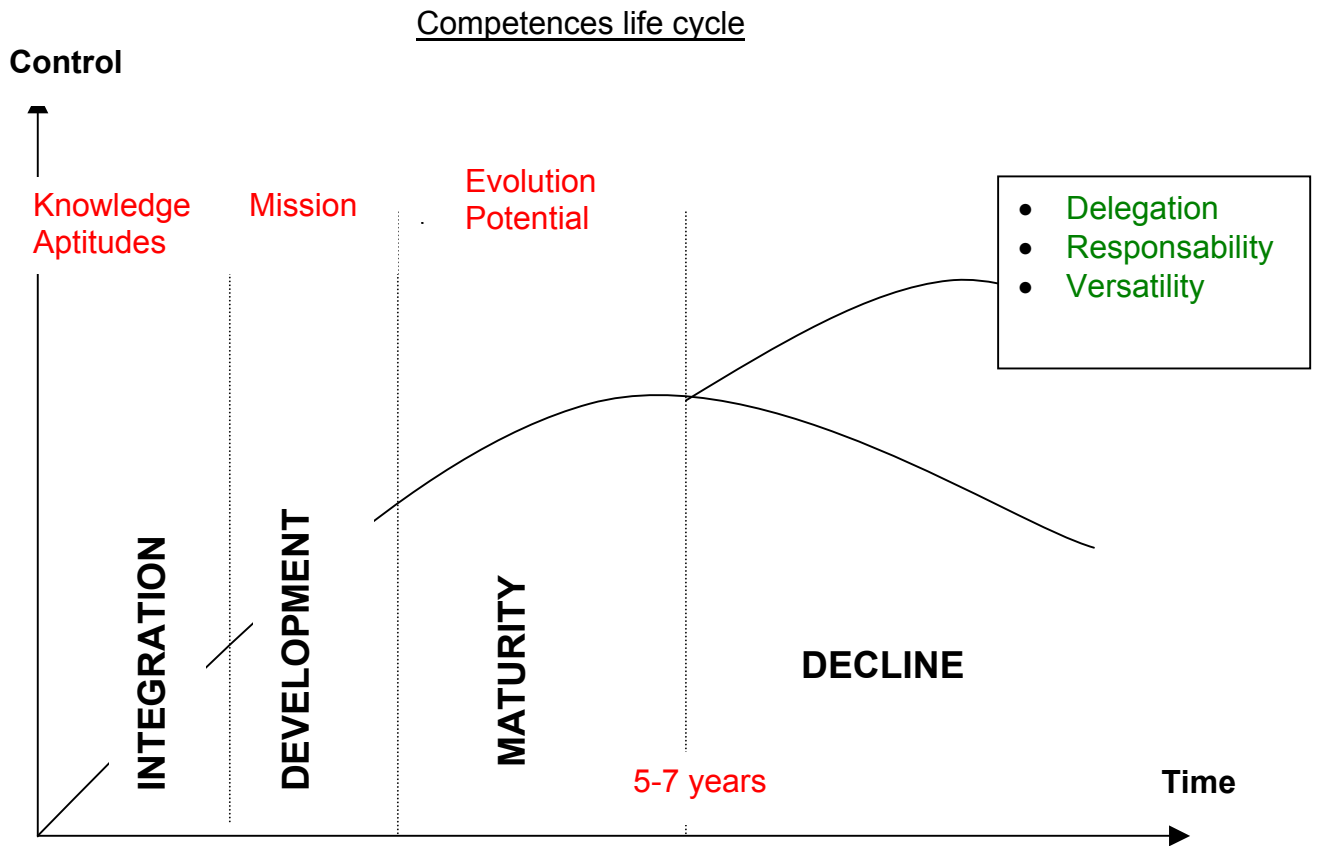


This tree shows what competence is:

The roots of the tree

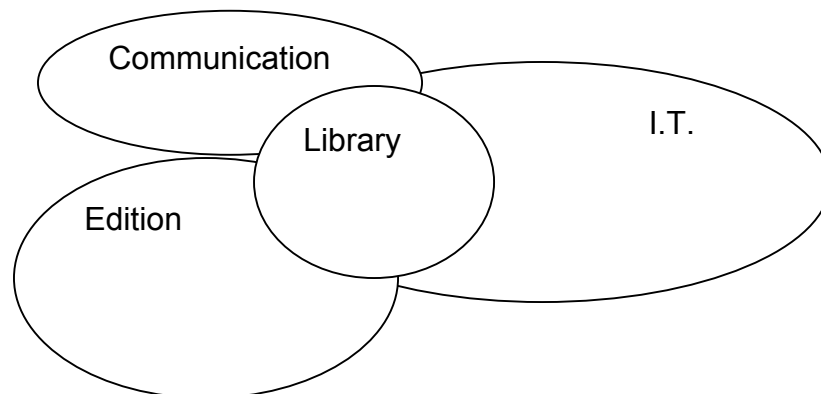
- Aptitude : it depends on personality and of the story of everyone. It is professional and extra professional experience
- Job knowledge : it's what the persons knows
- Activity : it's what the person does
- Performance : it's the fruits = the results

All that, depend also of motivations (the sun) and of means (the rain)
So competence is what you are able to



Cemagref librarians are mostly in maturity stage and perhaps decline. There is lassitude concerning repetitive task. So, it's important that hierarchy gives responsibilities and delegate to motivate librarians.

Blurring of the boundaries between professions



As you can see on this chart, our profession needs competences in communication, edition, information technology systems.

Some negative points:

- Librarians are not being replaced (retirement)
- Perhaps, in a few years, some Cemagref libraries may disappear
- Personnel stress : extra work
- Training and updating skills are essential to remain employable
- Autonomy loss/centralisation of resources

But to conclude, we can say that it is a challenging times

It can be a creative opportunity:

- Develop a positive attitude toward change
- Turn every new challenge into an opportunity
- Know and estimate our strength and weakness
- Refusing to change is both futile and counterproductive

Don't forget, our jobs have always had to change to accommodate new technologies so librarians know how to adapt.

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