



Professors' influence on students' choice of format for their research materials: are there differences between the academic disciplines?

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Aim of research

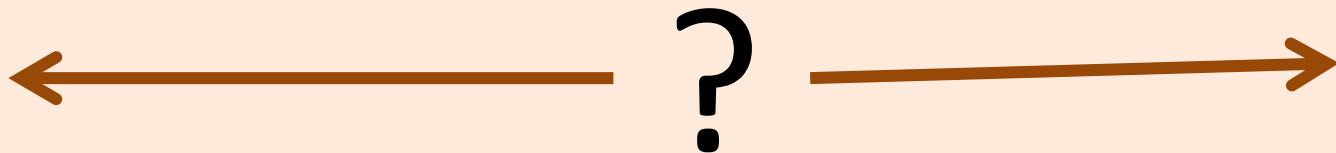


- to determine **professors' influence on students' choice** when it comes to the format of research materials
- to determine **possible differences between humanities and social sciences students**, with regards to the format of research materials they use in their master theses

Results of a previous studies



- youngest generations of students indicate their **preference for digital sources**
- humanities students' information behaviour indicates their **inclination toward print sources**



Information literacy of youngest generations of students



- *Liu, Z.*
- *Williams, P., Rowlands, I.*
- Preference for digital sources
- *Barrett, A.*
- Preference for print sources
- *Bruce, C.* : “We can focus on the manual and the skills we think that people need ... or we can orient ourselves to the experiences of the people we serve...”

Research questions



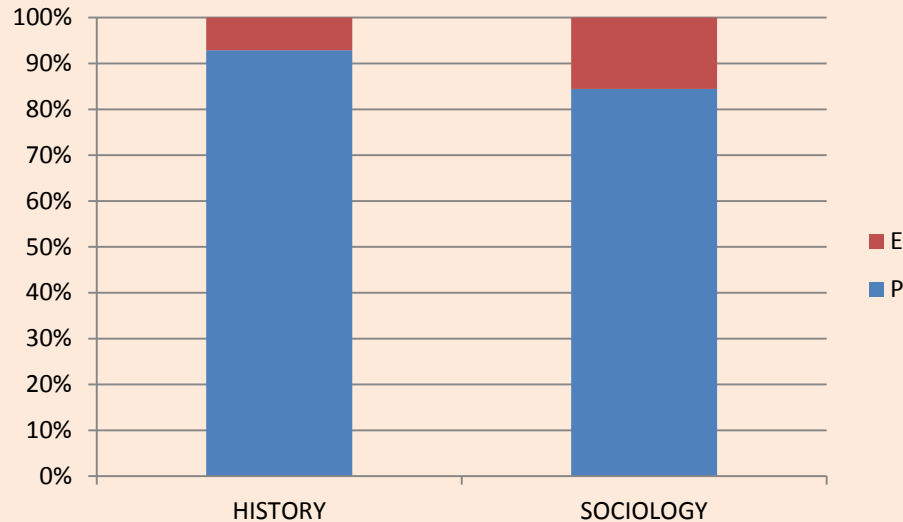
- Is there a difference in preference of the format between the humanities students and social sciences students?
- What format do professors suggest students should use?
- What format do professors prefer?
- Are professors aware of the young generations' preference of digital formats?

Research methods



- **content analysis** of master theses in History and Sociology, all defended at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split (2012, 2013)
- **survey research** - 16 social sciences professors and 16 humanities professors

Preference of the format in theses



- The history students use print materials (P) significantly more than do the sociology students
- Both majors use print materials (P) significantly more than electronic materials (E)



What format do professors suggest to students?

- Humanities faculty:
 - print (12)
 - electronic (1)
 - both (3)
- Social sciences faculty:
 - print (4)
 - electronic (1)
 - both (11)
- statistically significant difference between the humanities faculty and the social sciences faculty



Humanities faculty:

- *“...book is the book. What we call a book in its classical form is something that a student needs to learn to understand thoroughly.” (P-H)*
- *“This open form media allows for non-scientific issues to be “smuggled” as scientific.” (P-H)*

Faculty's personal preference of the format



- Humanities faculty:
 - print (8)
 - electronic (4)
 - both (4)
- Social sciences faculty
 - print (8)
 - electronic (7)
 - both (1)
- no significant difference in the faculty members' answers
- *"For in-depth studying I would always choose print format..." (P-H)*

Professors' opinions about the students' preference of formats



- Humanities faculty:
 - print (4)
 - electronic (9)
 - both (3)
- Social sciences faculty
 - print (1)
 - electronic (12)
 - both (3)
- no significant difference in the H&S faculty members' answers



- *"Like all young generations of postmodern sensibility they too are inclined toward electronic. What doesn't exist on the Internet is like it doesn't exist at all. This is one great drawback of humanistic discipline...When you study something you have to know what was previously written about your subject. And that is where you turn to bibliographies. You cannot study something without being acquainted with the bibliographies. Young people do not like that." (P-H)*

... and when **comparing the opinions**
about students' preferences and faculty suggestions ...



- Humanities faculty:
 - print (4) (12)
 - electronic (9) (1)
 - both (3) (3)
- Social sciences faculty
 - print (1) (4)
 - electronic (12) (1)
 - both (3) (11)
- BUT – both faculty are aware that students **prefer** the electronic format but they **suggest...**

Conclusion I



- There is a significant difference in terms of choice of material format
 - ➔ students of humanities use print materials significantly more than do students of social sciences
- Such results can in part be explained by the fact that humanities faculty **direct their students to use print resources more than e-resources**

Conclusion II



- Faculty (particularly humanities) suggest print resources although they are aware of students' preferences of e-resources
- ➔ Further research are needed to examine the reasons for this

Conclusion III

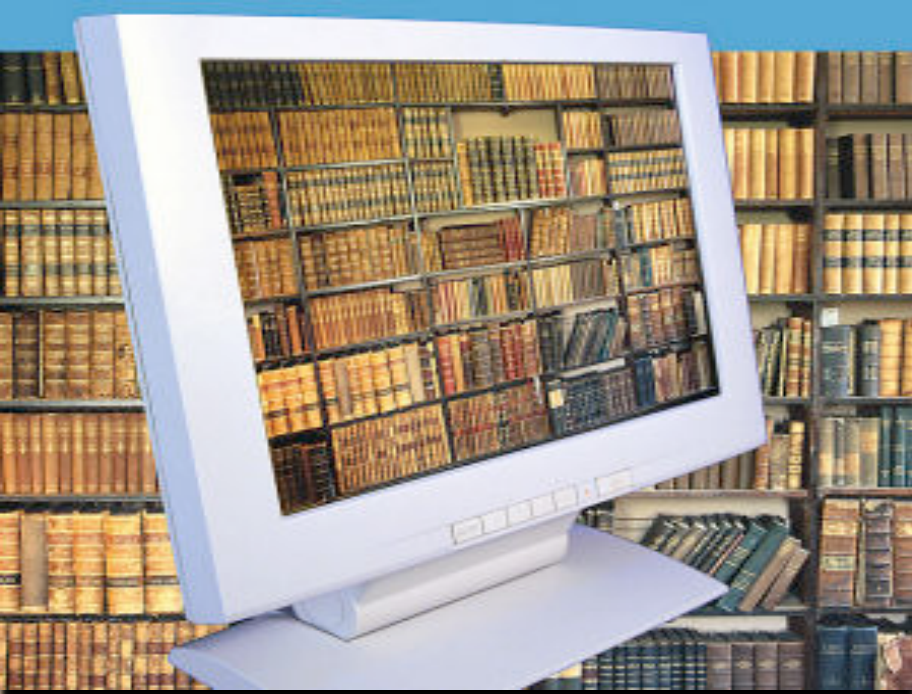


- Librarians need to:
 - **Respect different characteristics of academic disciplines** and faculty attitudes toward information resources which they recommend to students
 - Respect different formats when they **plan their collections**
 - **Strengthen IL competences of professors and students** so that the recommendations and/or selection of material are **not accidental**, but based on the optimal offer and developed skills that involve access and use of the information sources



Conclusion IV

- Additional research are needed
 - To investigate all factors affecting the choice and usage of print and e-formats
 - To investigate *if* and *how* information literacy competences of faculty and students affect on the preferences, choice and usage of information resources
 - What kind of IL education can lead to optimal choice and usage of diverse resources with respect to the disciplines and to the G-generation preferences



THANK YOU!