

# INFLUENCE OF E-LEARNING SYSTEMS IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF DOCUMENTARY PROFESSIONALS

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**Rezumat:** În ziua de azi carierele sunt mai solicitante ca niciodată. Dezvoltarea profesională și abilitățile de formare la locul de muncă fac parte din cariera majorității oamenilor. Există o mare tranziție de la stilourile cu cerneală și scrisul de mână la utilizarea internetului în predare, formare și învățare. Participarea la ore, învățarea unor abilități noi în dezvoltarea carierei, o varietate de opțiuni pentru a obține o instruire suplimentară sunt doar câteva dintre îmbunătățirile pe care sistemele de e-Learning le aduc dezvoltării profesionale. Dar cum influențează un sistem de **e-Learning** dezvoltarea profesională a unui specialist în tehnologia informației și documentare? Este o întrebare la care acest articol încearcă să dea un răspuns.

**Cuvinte cheie:** e-Learning, tehnologia informației, documentare, carieră.

**Abstract:** Today's careers are more demanding than ever. Professional development and job skills training have become a normal part of most people's careers. There is a big transition from ink pens and handwriting to the use of Web in teaching, training and learning. Taking classes, learning new skills in career development, the variety of options to get additional training are just some of the improvements e-learning has on professional development. But how does e-learning influence the professional development of a specialist in information technology and documentation? This is the question this article tries to answer.

**Keywords:** e-Learning, information technology, documentation, career.

## 1. Introduction

Just [1] as the transition away from ink pens, slide rules and handwriting caused a change in behavior on our part, so does the use of the Web as a scholarly resource for information, teaching, training and learning. E-learning is a method of education used for web-based distance education, with no face-to-face interaction.

E-learning, an abbreviation of electronic learning indicates the provision of education and training on the Internet. Why the Internet? Because it offers many advantages compared to other learning mechanisms [2]:

- Provides access to a large amount of information which was previously known only to individual specialists;
- Flexible, incorporating all kinds of multimedia: videos, images;
- Offers both synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning thus enabling a student to access information from anywhere and at any time.

According to the European Commission, e-learning is "The use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration." [3]

A specialist in information technology and documentation is a person who assists and educates users of libraries and information, develops and manages library collections, applies management and leadership skills, conducts and analyzes research. This article tries to identify the improvements e-learning has on career development of specialists in information technology and documentation.

## **2. E-learning and Career Development**

From the review of policy documents issued by the European Union referring to employability and e-learning, the relationship between e-learning and the acquisition of basic skills (mainly ICT) in view of employability is clear. The message of the European Commission [6] is basically: whatever form of e-Learning is good for employability since it implies the acquisition of basic skills such as ICT skills.

At the multi-stakeholder conference entitled “Towards a learning society”, held in Brussels on 19 May 2005, Viviane Reding, the Commissioner for Information Society and Media, and Ján Figel, the Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, underlined that e-learning could be useful not just for improving basic skills but also for promoting growth, jobs and an inclusive society [5] and urged stakeholders to work closely together to harness eLearning development.

When it comes to the priority “Investing more and more effectively in human capital and lifelong learning”, The European Commission in its Communication “Strengthening the implementation of the European Employment Strategy” suggests to “Develop innovative learning and training methods (such as e-learning) and invest in skills related to new information and communication technologies.”

The integrated guidelines for job and growth 2005-2008, also acknowledge the fact that “ICT can be used to improve access to learning and better tailor it to the needs of employers and employees.”[7]

## **3. E-learning and Specialists in Information Technology and Documentation**

Specialists in information technology and documentation work with electronic or written information. They know how to manage and evaluate collections, respond to the information needs of users and to use technology to improve access to information. Specialists in information technology and documentation are prepared for careers in library administration, public services, technical services, reference services, and collection development at public or academic schools and libraries. They usually work as librarians, information managers, media specialists, and other related professions. How can e-learning platforms help these specialists in their future career?

e-Learning has revolutionized and democratized the delivery and accessibility of education and has also changed how critical support services such as library and information services are provided. Libraries and librarians are very important to e-Learning. They are face to face to education. Library professionals need to understand the mechanics and concepts of e-Learning to provide effective distance library services. In distance education the learning takes place at the location of student and not at the institution of instruction. Today’s learners are located anywhere, of any age and any gender [8].

For specialists in information technology and documentation, the use of e-learning platforms in their studies, help them because E-learning students have to do many projects, on-line analyses, papers. Creating documents is an important aspect of information technology and documentation jobs. Document specialists do all the writing and may add graphs, drawings, music or video to enhance the message of the document; they decide if the best form is a plain written document or some other type of communication, such as an email or presentation. A document specialist creates documents that communicate ideas and information effectively using both writing and technology. In Table I it’s analyzed how e-learning platforms improve the future careers of specialists in information technology and documentation.

**Table I. E-learning platforms and specialists in IT&D**

Specialists in Information Technology and Documentation[9]	E-learning platforms help specialists in IT&D in their future careers by:
<p><b>1. Assist and Educate Users of Libraries and Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and identify information needs that represent a variety of age, academic, economic, and social groups and apply appropriate search strategies for effective and efficient information retrieval in each situation;</li> <li>• Analyze and evaluate the provision of information systems and services in a variety of library and information settings;</li> <li>• Educate users and potential users of information systems to locate and evaluate information resources.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Assist and Educate Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For assignment deadlines, homework etc students have to apply different strategies in order to find the resources they need;</li> <li>• Students can customize the course material as per their own needs. They have added control over their learning process and are able to better understand the subject;</li> <li>• Students can deal with teachers who are highly qualified, but cannot reach because of distance barriers, now with e-learning coming in scene they can give their inputs and help students in their research;</li> <li>• E-learning presents information creatively in a variety of formats so that students can learn to develop creative products in a variety of formats;</li> <li>• E-learning provides an environment that assists students with multiple learning styles;</li> <li>• E-learning platforms help students to seek information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures through equitable access to information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Develop and Manage Library Collections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and apply policies and procedures that support the selection and acquisition of information resources which will meet the information needs of an organization, institution, or community;</li> <li>• Manage, evaluate, and preserve collections of information resources.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Develop and Manage all courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In e-learning platforms, students get single central location for all course materials; they learn how to manage, evaluate and collect information coming from teachers and information from Internet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Organize and Represent Information Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and effectively apply principles of representation and systems of organization to provide access to resources in a variety of library and information environments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Organize and Represent Information Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and effectively apply principles of representation and system organization to provide access to all multimedia resources (video, audio);</li> <li>• Teachers encourage students to respect the principles of intellectual freedom, to respect copyrights and intellectual property rights, and to value the responsible use of technology.</li> </ul>

<p><b>4. Apply Management and Leadership Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand a wide range of organizational structures and management and leadership styles; demonstrate positive attitudes and constructive actions that characterize innovative leadership;</li> <li>• Recognize the value of collaborative planning and project management;</li> <li>• Apply the interpersonal and organizational skills necessary to manage and evaluate projects and personnel successfully;</li> <li>• Work effectively within and across a variety of organizational structures;</li> <li>• Communicate an organization's values and contributions, and identify sources that will support the organization's activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Apply Early Management and Leadership Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-learning provides flexibility for students to join discussions in the bulletin board threaded discussion areas at any hour, or visit with classmates and instructors remotely in chat rooms;</li> <li>• This feature helps students manage their time;</li> <li>• Also, through common assignments with one student as a leader, e-learning helps students plan, organize, evaluate time, results and organizational resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Conduct and Analyze Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and apply research and evaluation methods to investigate questions related to the acquisition, representation, organization, use, and/or dissemination of information;</li> <li>• Analyze and interpret findings of such research and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Conduct and Analyze Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through collaborative planning and project management, students apply research and evaluation methods to investigate different topics;</li> <li>• Students learn how to disseminate their findings with other classes or at on-line level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Demonstrate Basic Technical Expertise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the basic applications of modern technology in today's libraries and other information environments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>7. Use Basic Technical Expertise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of computer and Internet skills that are transferable to other facets of learner's lives;</li> <li>• Successfully completing online or computer-based courses builds self-knowledge and self-confidence and encourages students to take responsibility for their learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Approach Professional Issues with Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehend the social, political, and legal aspects of information creation, access, and ownership;</li> <li>• Engage in continuing learning in professional organizations in library and information science.</li> </ul>	<p><b>7. Approach Professional Issues with Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehend the social, political, and legal aspects of information creation, access, and ownership.</li> </ul>

E-learning's most important points are:

- Enhancing learner-faculty communication;
- Cooperation among learners;
- Employing active learning techniques;

- Receiving feedbacks;
- Focusing on timely execution of the task;
- Achieving communication containing high expectations;
- Rendering respect to different learning methods and different skills.

E-learning platforms encourage the development of the four main library and information skills:

- retrieving information;
- evaluating information;
- organizing information;
- communicating information.

These specialists can also learn a lot from libraries and information services in e-Learning.

Library services in the e-Learning environment are intended to provide traditional library services such as consultation, reference and bibliographical searches and course reading material. The basic goals of library and information services in e-Learning environment are:

- Access to information resources, such as texts, supplementary reading and reference service;
- Assess the library and information service needs of distance education programme in consultation with distance education with course teams, faculty and possibly a student survey;
- Determine the best media and delivery methods for e-Learning services such as audio, video, tape, print or online material to be distributed through traditional mail, fax, e-mail or download from website;
- Determine costs for setting-up library to provide services in e-Learning environment.

## 5. Conclusions

E-learning students are able to solve problems, reach decisions and integrate and connect new information better than traditional groups. E-learning enhances student motivation, self-efficacy, and group working skills and supports higher level thinking. It also enhances student ownership, increases higher order thinking and life skills and promotes group cohesiveness. All these advantages help future specialists in information technology and documentation in their future careers by developing specific skills:

- Basic knowledge of a personal computer (how to save and retrieve documents, how to navigate between folders, how to add a network drive, how to add printers, knowledge of different formats and ability to recognize virus files);
- Software knowledge (basic ability to understand operating system, ability to test&learn new software);
- Networking knowledge;
- Word processing and spreadsheets skills;
- Web navigation skills, including deep searching;
- File management and windows explorer skills, including storage devices.

In e-Learning process, the future libraries will play a role as active bridge between the learners and information, just as e-Learning will play a role as a bridge between students and careers. E-Learning provides the students opportunities to acquire education quickly and economically. For future specialists in information science and documentation e-learning has more advantages; in

this environment students learn how to assist and show others their papers, manage courses, organize and represent information resources they used, apply early management and leadership skills in various projects, conduct and analyze research, use basic technical expertise, approach professional issues with understanding.

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