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# **The digital library users: a case study on needs, expectations and skills**

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# Introduction

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- Results of the Digital Libraries Applications Project promoted by Digital Renaissance Foundation
- realised by Project Study Group: including experts of cultural institutions, researchers from universities and projects coordinators

# Applications of digital libraries

## Evaluation model

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<b>Cultural Institutions</b>	<b>Users Context</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<p><b>Approaches and strategies of Digital Libraries Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Delphi experts professional contributions;</li><li>- Specific activities held in Italy</li><li>-Funcionalities and contents available</li></ul>	<p><b>Needs, priorities, service perceptions</b></p> <p><b>Demographical analysis of users</b></p> <p><b>Socio-economic factors which have an impact on applications of digital libraries uses</b></p>	<p><b>User satisfaction: measured as GAP between user priorities and perceptions</b></p> <p><b>Frequency of use of digital resources and services</b></p>	<p><b>Cultural Institution Mission fulfillment.</b></p> <p><b>Measurement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-How much Digital Libray support users usual activities?</li><li>- What would not be possible without the Digital Library?</li></ul>

# Aim and objectives

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- Aim: Stimulate a culture of excellence in digital library services
  
- Objectives:
  - Test a common methodology for user studies
  
  - Comparison and benchmarking of best practices

# Research questions

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- What user needs are essential? What desirable?
- How can digital libraries be useful for users?
- How can digital libraries improve their services?

# Applications of Digital Libraries

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- Functionalities and contents
- User approach: case studies

# Digital collections and services

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## Digital resources

- E-Journals
- E-books,
- Data Bases
- CDROM,
- Learning material,
- Audiovisual and multimedia,
- Dissertations and student's works

## Services

- OPAC,
- Remote access
- Portal/site,
- User education
- Promotion,
- Staff assistance

# Access functionalities

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- Functionalities different from information retrieval (navigation, virtual space for collaboration, etc);
- Links and other form of collaboration with other cultural institutions (formal and informal collaboration);
- Integration of different digital collections with one access interface (and personalisation);
- Interaction with the user (not only unidirectional communication).

# Methodology

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- Fieldwork: 4 case studies
  - Limited to users inside the physical library
  - Not including not users
  
- Questionnaire and Structured Interviews

# Data analysis

Analysis factors	Survey Tools	Data
Who are digital libraries users?	Questionnaire Structured interview	Demographic data
What are users expectations for digital resources and services? What are they satisfied with? What is the impact of digital resources and services?	Questionnaire Structured interview	Users priorities for digital resources and services Advantage of the digital libraries Impact on users activities What digital library user wishes?
What is the user' service perception? What are they not satisfied?	Questionnaire Structured interview	Internet knowledge level Web site knowledge level Digital Library knowledge level Use Frequency Use Issues
What are user suggestions?	Questionnaire Structured interview	Open question Cultural institutions coordination User and staff education

# Demographical data

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- UNIFI: students, from 25 to 40 years, average knowledge of Internet, familiar with the Library system site;
- Mediateca: young people and students, from 19 to 25 years, average knowledge of Internet, remote and in site users;
- IMSS: professionals and researchers, from 32 to 76 years, very good knowledge of Internet, frequent remote and in site users.

# User satisfaction

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## Satisfied

- Remote access
- Portal

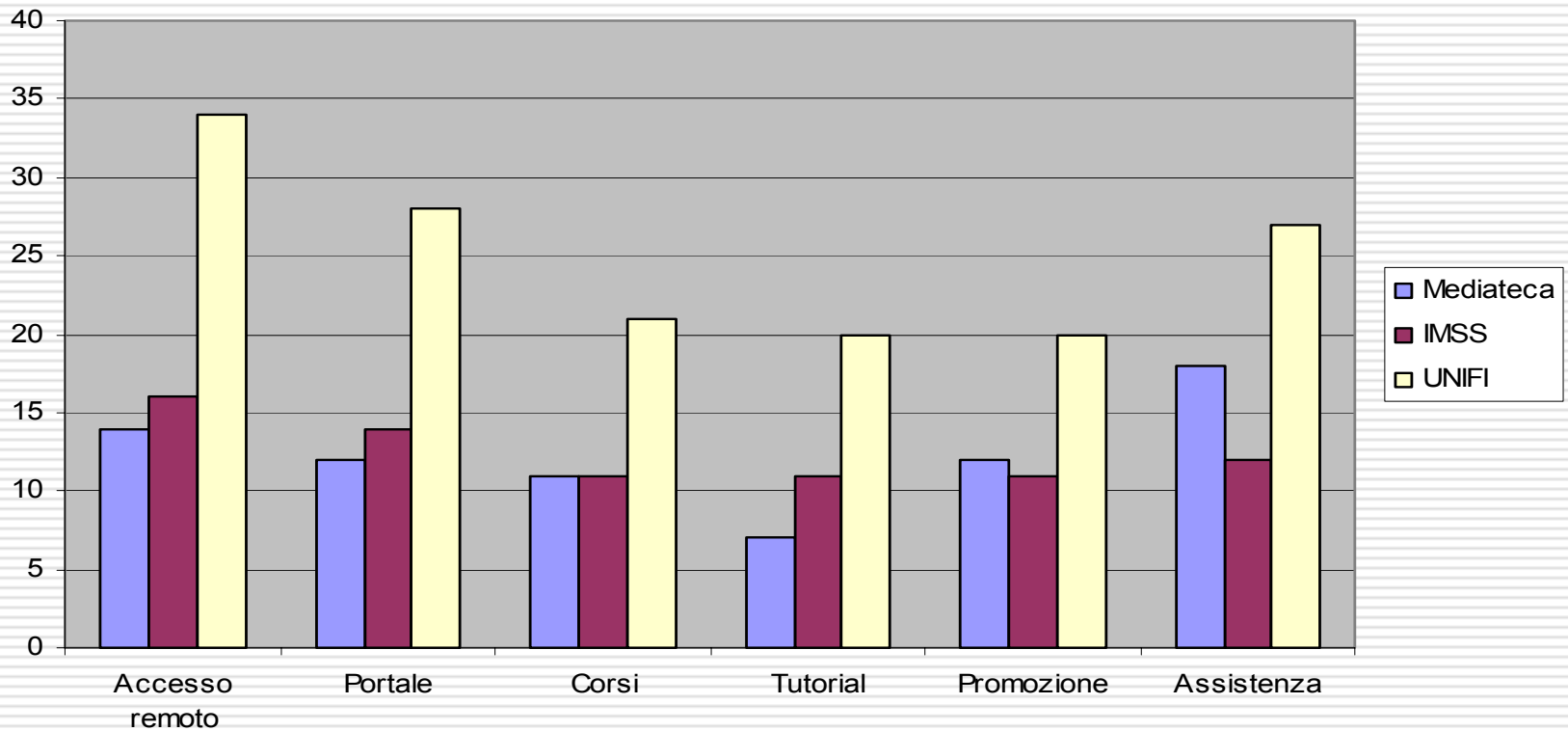
## Not satisfied

- Promotion
- Equipment
- User education
- Staff assistance

# Services: User priorities

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Comparazione priorità degli utenti - Servizi



# Digital resources: user priorities

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## Top

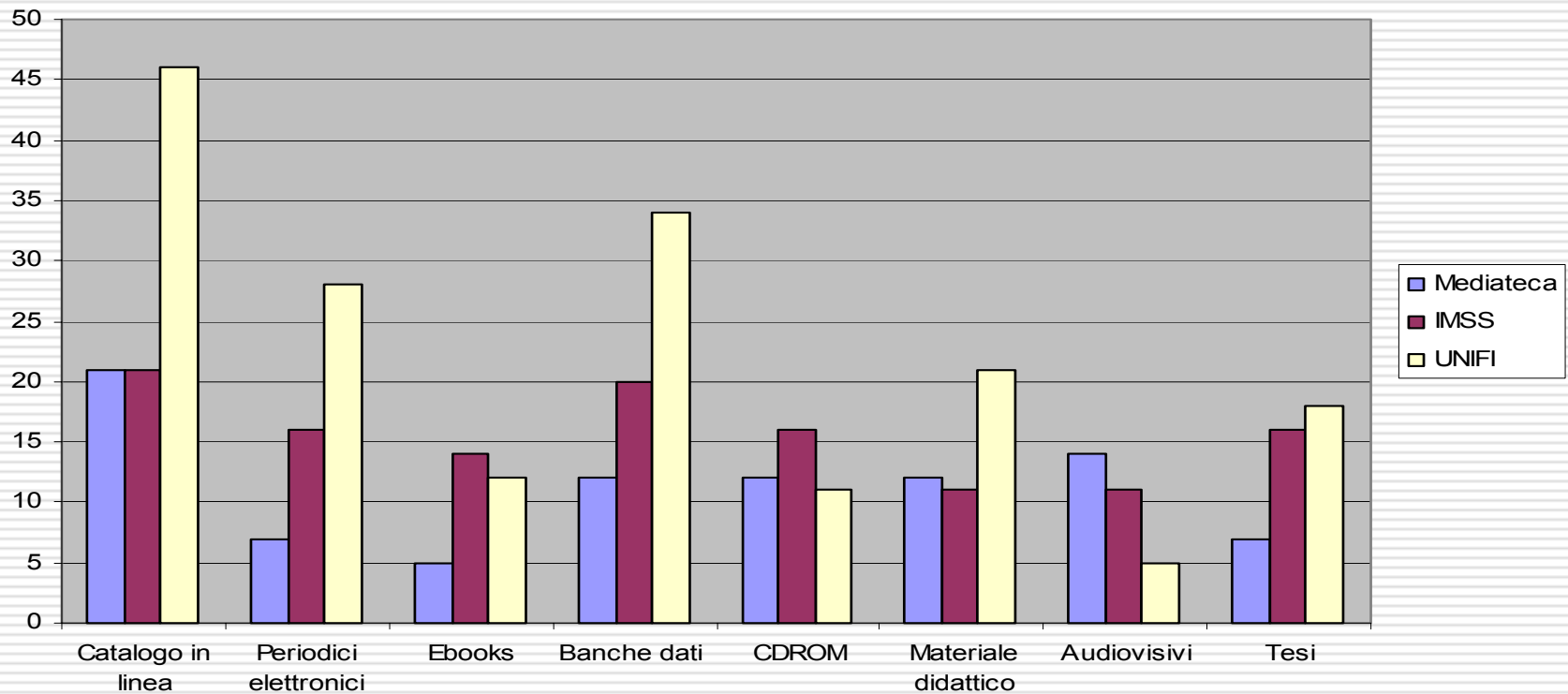
- OPAC
- Data Bases
- E-journals

## Other

- E-book
- Audiovisual
- Learning material
- Dissertations

# Digital Resources – Users priorities

Comparazione priorità degli utenti - Risorse



# Impact

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- Faster services
- Extension of resources available
  - (however not sufficient)

# Improvement

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- Easier use of OPAC and Data Bases
- Integration of the digital collections
- Personalisation

# Conclusion

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- Obviously, the user plays an important role in the digital library, but which role, is very often hard to define.
- Indeed the specific demands of the user may be difficult to know. The user group may differ, depending on the type of institution and the mission of the cultural institution.

# Perspective

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- We can develop services that better meet our users' expectations by comparing our digital library's data with that of peer institutions and examining the practices of those digital libraries that are evaluated highly by their users.

# Thanks for attention!

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