

"Probleme de Informare si Documentare" at a turning point
The information society
and the new requirements for information professionals

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"Probleme de Informare si Documentare" is celebrating its 30 years anniversary. As President of ADBS, "L'Association des professionnels de l'information et de la documentation, also as "a fervent supporter of librarianship and information and documentation" (thank you Viorica Prodan for your kind words when inviting me to contribute), and last but not least, as a true lover of the Romanian culture and intelligence, I want to congratulate INID and its staff for their permanent and remarkable efforts in the development and the promotion of the journal. I want to express my best wishes for the future success of "Probleme de Informare si Documentare" which certainly will be more and more a key publication in the context of the new information society.

The French documentalists, members of ADBS, and also the whole international community of information professionals, will certainly be regardful of what will be done in the near years in Bucuresti in the domain of information and documentation. I am convinced that they are ready to support any kinds of cooperation for helping the Romanian colleagues to keep in contact with the international professional community and to improve their knowledges and know-how.

If we look backwards and examine what happened during the 30 last years, we obviously could be surprised by the rapid and profound changes in our day to day life. This is true for our citizen' life. Thus, the political and economical changes in Romania during the last years are, of course, of a great importance, but they generate also new problems difficult to solve. In France, and generally speaking in Europe as a whole, the situation in the late 90's is completely different of what we have imagined and hoped after the "68' revolution".

In our professional life, changes are also very important. In the early 70's, we all participated in a new trend for information and documentation with developement of the first computerized data bases. A new information industry progressively emerged and all information professionals started to work with fascinating tools : the computer and the on-line documentation became the new fashion. We tried all to learn how to use these new possibilities ; we discovered new professional ways to be documentalists ; we improved our products and services taking into account the new needs of our clients and the new context of an electronic documentation.

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Recently, all what we learned during the last 20 years appeared suddenly outdated. Traditional means looked very limited, when compared with the new and exploding phenomena called Internet. The development of the worldwidely open electronic networking as well as the generalization of digital information or the unavoidable trend towards the multimedia seem now to become the universal and unique key-words. In the same time, Internet users or "netsurfers" now claim they do not need any professional intermediaries, considering that intelligent robots are better and much more efficient than traditional librarians or documentalists.

Information professionals need urgently to redefine their missions and their role. They must precise, explain and promote their own added value in the context of a generalized use of new information technologies. They have to rethink the profession, its aims and its means.

This is what ADBS, in France, started to do in 1994, like many other professional institutions. FID, the International Federation of Information and Documentation also worked during the last years in the same direction. In many professional organizations, it becomes obvious that "Information-Documentation" or "ID" as we say now in France, is no more a marginal activity. Entering the information society with sufficient winning card, will be the priority for all countries and information professionals should be the key agents for such an evolution (revolution).

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the foundation of "Probleme de Informare si Documentare", the information professionals in Romania and also abroad, must deliberately take into account the many possibilities offered now by the modern information technologies and methodologies (from Internet to multimedia, from groupware to EDI, from business intelligence to strategical or technological awareness). They have to change drastically their habits. Much more than in the past, they have to contribute to important political and societal issues such as the definition of a new information right and a new information ethics. They have to help in the developement of an information culture that will help people to become citizens of the new information society.

Also more than in the past we, information professionals, need collective tools for improving our practice. We need strong and renewed information associations and professional institutions which will be helpful in a generalized deregulated world. We need also ad-hoc training courses, the life-long professional education becoming more and more a key issue. We need professionals means such as electronic mailing lists and Web sites for exchanging views, ideas and projects. Lastly, we need scientific and technical journals and publications which can contribute to the development and improvement of knowledges and know-how.

This is why INID is right but also has the duty to continue to support the publication of its journal "Probleme de Informare si Documentare" and to improve it permanently. I am convinced that many non-Romanian colleagues will cooperate in such a collective and stimulating professional project.