

Carina Rey Martin*, Concepción Rodríguez-Parada, Ana R. Pacios, Maria Vianello Osti and Blanca Rodríguez Bravo

Transparency in the Management of Spanish Public University Libraries Through the Internet

<https://doi.org/10.1515/libri-2019-0051>

Abstract: Transparency in the management of 50 Spanish public university libraries was analysed using information available on their websites. The method consisted of checking the websites to identify a set of 18 evaluation indicators associated with the specific case of libraries and the Spanish Transparency Act, notably the chapter on active publishing. The indicators have been used in previous studies with the same objective. The results of the analysis revealed shortcomings, although there were also examples of good practises for each indicator, identified with libraries that have introduced quality systems for management. The indicators that were found most frequently in the sample were regulations, specific regulations for some services and service charters. However, the sample lacked some indicators that are vital to understand the reasons behind the development and management of information resources, such as the policy or programme of collection management. We found a need to review the quantity and quality of information that can be consulted on libraries' websites, and the presentation and format of some types of information so that they can be reused.

Keywords: transparency, Spanish public university libraries, websites, indicators, library management

1 Introduction

In Spain, Act 19 of 9 December 2013 on Transparency, Access to Public Information and Good Governance (Ministerio de la Presidencia 2013), "aims to expand and strengthen the transparency of public activity" (Art. 1) and

guarantee the public's right of access to information concerning this activity. However, the implementation of transparency by public authorities should not just be the result of applying the Act. Instead, public authorities should accept that transparency as a reliable instrument for accountability (Hermosa del Vasto, Alcaraz Quiles, and Urquia Grande 2017) is an essential condition that legitimises them and contributes to generating trust and credibility among citizens. Therefore, transparency is not an aim in itself: it reveals the correlation that should exist between transparency and good practises, ethical codes, certifications, audits and strategic plans.

At the present moment, the notions of transparency and accountability are tied to the concept of "good governance" and, in particular, the philosophy of "open government" that makes it possible for the activities of the government and the public administration to be open to the scrutiny and supervision of the citizens at all levels. The objective is for the citizens to participate in creating and improving public services and in bolstering transparency and accountability. This is why citizen collaboration and participation are key in any form of "open government". It is in the context of "open government" that we find Act 19 on Transparency, which determines that public sector managers should be responsible for ensuring transparency in public activities, that the citizens have access to information and that the duties of good governance are observed.

In order for library professionals to be able to apply the Transparency Act, in their position as managers of units required to present accounts and as professionals responsible for the use of various resources, in previous studies, observable, measurable indicators were proposed to identify achievements, changes or performance in the area of transparency (Pacios 2016). Transparency has been analysed in Spanish public libraries (Pacios et al. 2018) and in university libraries that are members of the Consortium of University Services of Catalonia (CSUC) (Rey and Rodríguez-Parada 2018; Rey, Rodríguez-Parada, and Camón 2019), to test the validity of the indicators. The set of indicators is based on the application of Chapter II of the Transparency Act, which addresses active publishing and reflects the obligation of government bodies and associated entities and institutions to permanently publish

*Corresponding author: Carina Rey Martin, Biblioteconomia, documentació i comunicació audiovisual, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, E-mail: carina.rey@ub.edu

Concepción Rodríguez-Parada: Biblioteconomia, documentació i comunicació audiovisual, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Ana R. Pacios and Maria Vianello Osti: Biblioteconomia y Documentación, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Blanca Rodríguez Bravo: Patrimonio artístico y documental, Universidad de Leon, Leon, Spain

certain public information, as required by the legislation, on their transparency portals or websites, to guarantee the transparency of their activity.

Following the above line of research, the present study continues to observe whether libraries, in this case Spanish public university libraries, apply the Act. The aim was to provide an overview of university libraries' transparency of management and to identify and recommend good practises. This work, like others (Kann-Christensen and Andersen 2009) aims to show that libraries should be aware of how they describe and see their activities and practises.

2 The Management of University Libraries and Transparency

In the area of organisation management, projects on transparency are frequently tied to accountability and aim to explore the association between the two concepts. The relationship between transparency and accountability has been approached from a number of different perspectives, depending on the terms of reference (Mabillard and Zumofen 2016). although the most common perspective describes transparency as a facilitator of accountability. However, the former does not necessarily generate the latter, even when the two concepts coexist (Fox 2007). Gaventa and McGee (2013) suggest that researchers should compare and contrast the impact of initiatives guided by transparency and accountability in different sectors in order to understand the truth of their relationship. All these writers stress the need to examine the relationship between the two concepts in greater detail. Fox (2007) describes the relationship as "uncertain" and proposes that it can be understood in terms of "two distinct variants": that "transparency can be either 'clear' or 'opaque', while accountability can be either 'soft' or 'hard'".

If we focus on the area of public institution management, transparency is particularly important because "public management without control or accountability replicates the gap between state and people and distorts the meaning of public, which changes from transparent and visible to obscure and hidden" (Duque Daza 2013). The study by Vasconcellos Leão Lyrio and João Lunkes (2018) shows that for there to be transparency in the public sector, governments need direct relationships with society and citizens need greater involvement in determining the actions undertaken by public agents. The new technologies that have originated from the massification of the Internet play a critical role in bringing the government closer to the

citizens and facilitating citizens' access to information as well as dialogue between the two sides. In this respect, the Transparency Act is categorical: there can be no transparency if information is not available and accessible in institutional portals.

As services that depend on the public administration, libraries have begun to incorporate and implement this transparency and accountability, demonstrating their professional level of management skill. As Pacios and Pérez-Píriz (2018, 2) affirmed, "strategic management and the planning inherent in it are a consolidated practise in many libraries". Solimine (2010, 16) agreed when he stated that "the distrust with which the library sector and the public service sector in general reports its attempts to introduce these methodologies can be considered to have been overcome [...] to attain the objectives, they must adopt criteria and management techniques that prioritise internal efficiency and focus on efficiency in activities aimed at the general public". However, there is a lack of studies on the management of university libraries in Spain, despite the contributions of the Spanish Academic Libraries Network (REBIUN) in the creation of working groups for specialised areas, the dissemination of work materials and the organisation of training seminars. During the academic year 2017–2018, the Working Group on Statistics (GTE) began to review assessment indicators, which continue to constitute a fundamental element of the network. The work, which included such tasks as introducing changes in the data collection form and reducing the number of indicators on library loans, focused on proposing new indicators measuring aspects that are crucial in the decision-making process, but we should not overlook other indicators on social networks and research support. REBIUN provides access to these indicators, which enables the undertaking of research studies of interest to Spanish university libraries, such as a study on the impact of the recession (Simón-Martín, Arias-Coello, and Simón-Blas 2016) or a study to identify libraries with the most efficient staff management (Simón-Martín, Simón-Blas, and Arias-Coello 2016).

In 2005, Spain's National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) started a specific programme for evaluating libraries (Balagué 2007). Since then, considerable attention has been paid to quality management in university libraries. A culture of quality management in Spanish university libraries over the last decade through the implementation of quality plans has made this a concept of increasing importance for most libraries, and literature on this subject is abundant (Pinto Molina, Balagué Mola, and Anglada i de Ferrer 2007; Rey Martín and Rodríguez-Parada 2002;).

Studies on other aspects or models of management, like social responsibility, have revealed how Spanish university libraries are gradually adopting techniques from business (Herrera-Morillas, Castillo-Díaz, and Pérez-Pulido 2014). The concept of accountability is not new in the library sector, as shown by Dervin and Clark's study from the late 1980s (1987) and subsequent studies on the topic (Osman 2004), including a review by Cox (2018). However, in contrast to the literature on the business sector, research in the library sector has not been able to pinpoint professional profiles defined by how they address both transparency and accountability, with the result that there are still no studies of the relationship between the two concepts and the differences between them in this sector. It is true that the two terms are used in certain articles to justify services innovation (Lessick 2016), to consider the use of performance management tools like the balanced scorecard (Taylor and Heath 2012) or to warn of the inappropriate use that governments can make of their citizens' information (Wright 2013).

The relatively scarce literature on transparency in libraries, still in its early years, has defined this transparency in the following terms.

- As a function and feature of libraries. The International Federation of Libraries (IFLA) affirms that libraries are by their very nature institutions dedicated to transparency and to making more precise, impartial and socially relevant information in the fields of education, science and technology accessible to the community at large. IFLA made this its objective in 2009 with the pilot transparency workshop “Libraries as transparency institutions” after authors like Sturges (2008) had already observed that, for the institutions they served, libraries were facilitators of institutional transparency which could offer “potential for the combating of corruption through access to knowledge of regulations and laws, as well as revelations of wrong-doing” and which was especially important in countries with serious levels of corruption. This same vision of transparency is offered by Sturges and Crnogorac (2012) in their analysis of the role played by libraries as contributors to the freedom of information.
- As a feature of internal communication. This relates to creating an organisation that is better informed about the decisions and processes that foster commitment amongst employees (Farrell 2016).
- As a prerequisite in the administration of a library. This relates to offering online access to information (budgets, strategic plans, programmes, annual reports, etc.), as observed in Burke (2016) and Pacios (2016). It

may also be related to the fact that evidence is increasingly important as a routine part of planning and decision-making in the library.

- As a means to reinforce users' trust in the library. Recently, librarians have debated whether the community at large needs to understand how libraries operate in order to have greater trust in them: for example, they have considered whether the public should be helped to understand the procedure by which documents are eliminated, the rationale behind off-site storage or even the library's subscriptions policy. It also concerns the manner in which service providers can be more transparent with the service users. This can be seen in one of the most recent webinars offered by the National Information Standards Organization in May 2019, entitled “Libraries and The Move to Transparency”.

In short, the relationship between libraries and transparency has been simultaneously studied from two perspectives: according to one, the library is a facilitator of institutional transparency for the organisations it serves as an information provider; according to the other, it is a practitioner of transparency for its own users, who are invited to know what exactly the library does and how, by being informed about a library's management and internal procedures.

Therefore, the ultimate aim of transparent library management is to close this gap, because in a democratic society people have not only the right but the duty to know and assess actions undertaken by public services. This is what justifies the analysis presented below, which was undertaken to determine whether Spanish university libraries adhere to the Transparency Act.

3 Methodology

The methodology used in this study consisted of visiting each of the websites of the libraries in the sample. Public universities were selected as they must adhere to the Transparency Act. Hence, their libraries must also implement this Act, as they receive public funds. According to REBIUN guidelines (1999), the regular budget assigned to university libraries as a cost unit should represent at least 5% of the university's total regular budget, which would justify the libraries' transparency.

Information was collected for analysis during July 2018. The websites of 50 Spanish university libraries in the public system were examined. As in the above

studies, the search focused on identifying and locating indicators of transparency in management (Pacios 2016). For these indicators, a series of criteria were considered that are applied in public entities, including the universities in which these libraries provide their services (Martín-Cavana and Barrio 2017).¹ The 18 indicators were grouped into eight information areas (Table 1): Purpose of the service and objectives; Governing bodies and operation regulations; Services offered; Information resources; Staff; Results; Financial information; and Membership of networks and other collaborations. All the indicators are associated with information required by the Transparency Act in relation to active publishing and access to public information, as described in the Act's Articles 5 to 24.

The information was collected on an Excel sheet as this enabled us to display the results clearly and extract general data on the presence of the indicators. We also considered elements that determine the quality of a website: information visibility, accessibility, currentness, clarity and integrity (Codina 2000; Jiménez Piano and Ortiz-Repiso Jiménez 2007). These attributes of information are established in the *Metodología de Evaluación y Seguimiento de la Transparencia de la Actividad Pública* (Methodology for Assessment and Monitoring of Transparency in Public Activity) known by the acronym MESTA (AEVAL and the Consejo de Transparencia y Buen Gobierno 2016), in accordance with Spanish law. Visibility means that information should be easy to access and in a noticeable place. Accessibility refers to the fact that no authorisation is required to consult the information and therefore concerns the ease or difficulty of accessing the contents, measured in the number of clicks required to reach it. Currentness means the information is up to date or at least from after 2016, that is, no more than two years before the study was carried out. The next criterion is clarity: the information must be understandable and available in the country's official languages. Finally, we refer to integrity, defined by the complete, comprehensive nature of the information that can be consulted on the website. Article 11 of the Transparency Act establishes that information should be presented in such a format that it can be used ("reutilised") by any natural or

Table 1: Indicators Associated with Transparency.

Information areas	Indicators
(1) Purpose of the service and objectives	a. Definition of the mission b. Strategic plan
(2) Governing bodies and operation regulations	c. Members of the library committee d. Regulations e. Specific regulations for services f. Charter of users' rights and responsibilities
(3) Services offered	g. Service charter
(4) Information resources	h. Policy/programme of collection management i. Institutional policy of open access
(5) Staff	j. Organisation chart k. Staff directory
(6) Results	l. Management indicators (scorecard) m. Satisfaction surveys n. Annual report o. Awards, prizes and certificates
(7) Financial information	p. Budget q. Tendered contracts and calls
(8) Membership of networks	r. Networks with which the library works

legal person. However, the dispersion of documents makes it difficult to assess these criteria. Therefore, data on the research results correspond mainly to the number and percentage of the indicators that were identified.

4 Results and Discussion

As observed in previous research (Pacios 2016; Pacios et al. 2018; Rey and Rodríguez-Parada 2018; Rey, Rodríguez-Parada, Camón 2019), it was difficult to obtain the results due to the structure and organisation of the websites and the lack of data visualisation criteria, as well as the variation in the header names under which information is given on the assessed indicators. However, this characterisation does not apply to the section containing more general information on each university's library system or on the libraries in each of their physical locations, even when these sections have different names. The most common name of the link that tends to lead to these indicators is "Get to know us" or "Find out about us" used by 17 libraries, followed by "The library" used by 15 centres,

¹ When this paper was completed, the Commitment and Transparency Foundation (FCyT) had published the *Examen de transparencia 2019* (Transparency Report, March 2019), which proposed two areas (Dependent entities and Board of Trustees: supervision and accountability) as well as five new indicators that will be applied in the new transparency report on the websites of Spanish universities. After reading it quickly, we decided that it did not alter the results of this study.

“General information” by six, and “Library and quality” (UAM)² or “What is the CRAI?”³ (UB and URV). The UdG library does not include this information. The UNED has a “Transparent library” section, which helps us to meet our objectives and includes various plans (Accessibility, Cultural activities, Sustainable library, etc.) in addition to activity reports, regulations and the budget, among other relevant information.

Below we analyse the results obtained in the order of the methodological proposal for areas and indicators (Table 1), with a focus on some of the good practises that were identified.

1a Mission or “expression of the purpose of the library”. This meets the need to explain why the organisation exists and is based on the library’s functions. A mission statement was found on 34 libraries’ websites or 68% of the total. Its location varied. In some cases, it was part of the Service charter, as in the UIB and the UVA. In other cases, it had its own section with a short, concise text as in the UNILEON library. Occasionally, it was presented along with the vision and values (UEX and UVA), within the strategic plan (USC and UGR), as part of the Regulations (UCO and UHU) or in the presentation of the entity without explicitly mentioning the concept of mission, as in the UMH library.

1b Strategic plan. This is considered one of the most important instruments in the management of organisations, because it establishes the objectives that should be obtained within a certain period, which is usually set as three years. Of the 24 strategic plans that could be consulted (48%), half (12) were in force (UB, UVA, UGR, UNED, USAL, ULL, UAB, UPC, UdL, US, UNIZAR and UNICAN). Two further plans expired recently, while the remaining 10 plans expired over a decade ago or have been extended.

Some libraries are reluctant to call this management instrument by its name. For example, the UdL library prefers to call its strategic plan a “plan of action”. However, the opposite case may also occur. In other words, some libraries state that they have a strategic plan, but close examination reveals that it is an operating plan (UV), an improvement plan (UPV) or various annual plans (UCA).

2c Members of the library committee (or a corresponding university body that includes representatives from all levels of the university community). The low presence of this indicator is surprising. Only 13 libraries (26%) recognise the existence of such a body, despite its undeniable importance in service planning, development and

management. The chairperson of the library committee tends to be the vice-rector responsible for this area.

As with other indicators, the availability and volume of information on the websites varies. The ULPGC, UNIOVI and UCO libraries include this information within their library regulations and indicate committee members’ positions or levels, the UAB gives members’ names and surnames in its activity report and the UAH library even publishes the minutes of the committee’s meetings. The UPO included this information in its Regulations for the internal functioning of the governing council during 2004 and added the functions that it should carry out. The most “transparent” library in relation to information about the committee’s work is that of the UJAEN. Its general information section “Get to know us” has a specific entry on this committee, where you can access all the meeting minutes since 2000.

2d Regulations. This term covers a set of essential documents that establish the rules of operation and contain provisions relating to service organisation that must be followed by library staff and users. It is the indicator with most presence, as it was found on the websites of 47 libraries or 94% of the total. Some libraries, such as the US, prioritise the ethical code over the main regulations and other specific regulations.

Unusually, the UNIOVI published its regulations on the organisation and running of the library in the *Boletín Oficial del Principado de Asturias* (Official Gazette of the Autonomous Community of Asturias) (25/VI/2013).

2e Specific regulations for services. These regulations complement the main regulations and govern how some services are run. They tend to be grouped under the heading “Regulations”, from which each specific regulation can be accessed. In addition to the usual regulations on document loans, group workrooms, electronic resources, laptop loans, self-learning rooms and spaces reserved for research, regulations have been introduced recently on the digital copy of works dated prior to 1900 (UNIOVI), the use of non-automated drop boxes and equipment for consulting and copying materials (US). Unlike the above cases, the UCO library’s main regulations approved in 2017 include specific regulations on, for example, the loan, use and conservation of the early, historical collection.

As an innovation, the UHU library has drawn up user regulations by which any inhabitant of Huelva can use the facilities and services, “depending on the library’s capacity and resources”. The UNED has regulations on recording and filming, on use of the library WhatsApp and on groups of visitors.

2f Charter of users’ rights and duties. This is another of the documents that regulates the running of the service. It

² Universities are referred to using their corresponding acronyms (see the Appendix).

³ This is the acronym used for the new model of university library in Spain: Learning and Research Resource Centre.

is designed to inform users clearly and comprehensibly about what their relationship with the library should be like. From all of the libraries studied, 42% (21) have produced a charter of users' rights and duties. This charter is sometimes a separate document (UA, UC3M, UNICAN, UNILEÓN, UM, UPM, UPN, US, UV, UVA) or included within the library's service charter, as mentioned below.

3g Service charter. This is one of the documents that were found on the largest number of library websites (78%). Its widespread use is due to the implementation of quality and assessment programmes since the late 1990s, which describe the service charter as one of the best instruments of quality and commitment to users.

Although the definition of a service charter is clear and most Spanish university libraries publish this document, up to 39 versions were identified, which could be discussed in a specific study. One weakness is the use of the term "service charter" when the document does not meet the requirements established in the UNE⁴ standard, because it excludes quality commitments or indicators that enable verification of compliance. Similarly, some service charters include general commitments but not indicators. In contrast, the UNIRIOJA library has drawn up a document entitled "Charter of Commitments" (approved by the university's quality committee in 2006) that describes the services that the library provides, the commitments and the indicators, but in no case mentions the term "service charter".

In a few cases, errors were found in the indicators for assessing commitments, either because they tended to be very general, they were badly set out or they were not stated in the way established in the regulations.

Service charters have been implemented since the 1990s. Consequently, some libraries have already revised their service charters, and others are in the process of doing so.

An exemplary case is that of the UCLM service charter. This is the only one that has received certification from the Spanish State Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (AEVAL), in 2017.

4h Policy of collection management. As the collection is a vital resource for the provision of services and requires one of the largest budget items, it is crucial for university libraries to have a policy of collection management that guides the selection, purchase, weeding, budget control, assessment of access and use of the collection, and

establishes the required preservation and conservation policies according to the institution's and the users' aims. The preparation and dissemination of a collection management policy guarantees that management is a transparent, impartial process because the policy determines how the purchases budget is distributed between the various departments or faculties. In addition, it is a good instrument for communication. Given its importance, it tends to be approved by the library committee. One of its most defining characteristics is that it should be a dynamic document to cover the information needs of curricula and research lines at each point in time. However, such policies were only found on eight websites (UB, UMA, UNIRIOJA, UNILEÓN, UNICAN, UC3M, UHU and URJC), which represents 16% of the total number of libraries analysed. The lack of collection management policies in university libraries is not new, as affirmed by Herrera Morillas (2013).

4i Institutional policy of open access. Although this topic is highly relevant today, only 28% (14 libraries) disseminated this policy through their websites. This apparent disinterest could be due to the policy being more closely associated with Spanish universities' executive council members, specifically their vice-rectors for research, than with libraries themselves. Note, however, that the Catalan universities differ in this sense, in that since 2009, the Inter-University Council of Catalonia (CIC) has agreed to undertake actions to facilitate and promote open access through widespread approval of this policy, which was adopted in successive years by all Catalan universities and made available on their library websites from the same year. Other universities that have recently approved an institutional open access policy are the UCM, UM, UPV, UPM, UAH and UAL, while the UMA is in the process of drawing up its policy.

The search for this indicator once again highlights how difficult it can be to locate the same information on websites, because it can be placed under different headers, for example under "Help guides" (UdG) or "Teaching staff" (UPC), or because it is mentioned but cannot be consulted.

5j Organisation chart. This graphic representation shows the organisational structure of a library, the relationship among units, the hierarchy and even the library model adopted. The sensitive nature of this information perhaps explains why it was only found on the websites of 21 libraries (42%).

Like some of the indicators mentioned above, there are notable variations in the organisation chart. In some cases, the term is equated with "directory" and therefore presented without a graphic representation. In other cases, graphic representations under the header "structural organisation" do not clearly show the hierarchy or

⁴ UNE 93200 (April 2008) establishing the requirements that should be met by Service Charters, based on Royal Decree 951 of 29 July 2005, which sets out the general framework for improvement in the quality of general state administration.

relationships among units. Finally, like other indicators that we analysed, such as surveys, budget or scorecard, this information cannot always be accessed from the library's website as a password may be needed to consult it.

5k Directory. Sometimes the differences between an organisation chart and a directory are not entirely clear, if we look at the website contents. However, there are some good examples of directories. The UBU library has created a directory containing all its staff details, and the information can be retrieved by searches using the name of the person or the section in which they work. Another example of good practise is the UPO, which has organised its directory into professional categories: librarians, administrative support staff, and trainee grantholders, a subsection that is not included in any other directory.

In many cases, information is lacking in the various forms of this indicator. However, unlike the organisation chart, it is found on more libraries' websites: a total of 74% (37 libraries).

6l Management indicators structured as a scorecard. This and the two following indicators (6m Surveys and 6l Report) form part of the results section and are therefore most closely associated with performance assessment and measurement. The use of these indicators has changed over time. The first initiatives of a quantitative nature led to qualitative initiatives measuring the value or impact of library use. Although the scorecard is not widely used as a management tool, it is recommended by organisations and professional associations such as the American College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (Balanced Scorecard Institute 2017; Bielavitz 2010), as well as libraries that do apply it appreciate its advantages (De la Mano and Creaser 2016).

The websites of 48% of the libraries that we analysed publish their management indicators. However, the presentation varies and follows three patterns: a scorecard considered as a summary of the main indicators; a list of indicators focused on various aspects, according to REBIUN's proposal; and indicators associated with the service charter. Only the UJA library could be classified among the first group because it organises its indicators in a scorecard. The result is a very comprehensive document that presents three types of indicator in detail (objectives, process and service charter), corresponding to 2015 and 2016. Information is also provided on level of compliance, alignments and survey results. This is clearly a true example of performance assessment and analysis and insight into future actions.

The second group includes the UCM, whose website has a comprehensive statistics section containing a report on its libraries and a summary of each one's indicators since 2005, as well as sets of statistics on the technical

process, circulation, interlibrary loans and website access. The "Library in figures" section of the UVA and the UCA contains indicators on key results and the service charter, through a computer application that can be used to generate these indicators. The UPF has an "Indicators and report" section on economic resources, human resources, facilities, information resources and service provision. The UAB has a sub-header within the "Quality" section for indicators in the service charter and others used in its management (strategic plan, quality or loans) although they do not appear to be organised as a scorecard. The UAH library has no scorecard, but the assessment of its strategic plan contains monitoring indicators on each of the proposed objectives.

Finally, the third model is the one used by the largest group of libraries (15). On their websites, we found a list of indicators included in their respective service charters (UPO, UGR, UIB, UCO, UCA and UNIZAR, among others). The UJI and the UNED compare management indicators for 2015, 2016 and 2017. The UM includes a list of scorecards with indicators from 2007 that can only be accessed if users log in, as is also the case with the UNEX library.

6m Surveys. Periodic satisfaction surveys administered to the various user groups reveal users' opinions of the services that are provided, changes in their expectations or needs for improvement. This is therefore basic information on quality, from an external perspective.

The quality commitments made in service charters include undertaking this type of survey. As we will see below, libraries recognised by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) or the International Standard Organization (ISO) must administer satisfaction surveys to all user groups and have a time series of at least three consecutive years.

When the information search was carried out (July 2018), five libraries had active surveys and were requesting user participation via an alert on the website's home page. A total of 26 libraries (52%) facilitated the consultation of survey results. For example, the UCM presents the results obtained prior to 2008, grouped by user type and complemented by two reports titled *Cómo nos ven nuestros usuarios desde 2003 a 2012* (How our users see us, from 2003 to 2012), which is a very complete dataset. The UAB has also drawn up reports since 2001, although in some cases they are partial studies on specific aspects. Recently, they have accompanied the results with interesting infographics or posters that make it easier to understand and disseminate the information. Another library with a long tradition of this type of study is that of the UJI, which has been carrying out satisfaction surveys since 2006 and is now on the seventh edition, corresponding to 2016–2017.

Three other libraries (UCA, UAL and USAL) had evidence of this management practise on their websites at the time of the review. The third of these libraries, the USAL, analysed “people’s satisfaction” (according to EFQM terminology) and administered a user satisfaction survey (2017) in the same year.

In contrast, some libraries provide information with results prior to 2015 (UAM and UCLM) including user studies, some carried out with the LibQUAL model, and service quality surveys.

6n Report. Reports provide information on the activities undertaken by the library over a year. They are assessments that include all the information on budget execution, statistics, survey results, a list of staff activities and activities programmed for users. Although most Spanish university libraries have been drawing up reports for decades, they vary in currentness, and in the volume and type of information they contain.

Among the first libraries to draw up and disseminate reports, ULPGC (1994) and the UAM (1997) are notable for their pioneering work. The UVA and the UMA (2017), as well as the UPN, the UAM and the ULPGC (2016), are the university libraries that provide the most recent information in reports. The ULPGC includes activity indicators in its report.

The UGR has three documents for accountability, as it distinguishes between the management report, the academic report and the yearbook. The management report, the latest of which is for 2017, is a short document that details the most notable projects associated with “commitments to improve services” in the year. The academic report (academic year 2017–2018) describes projects that are underway, and the resources allocated to the institutional aims of research, teaching and learning. Both reports can be consulted under the heading Academic and management reports. In addition, the section on Library documents contains a list of the yearbooks produced between 2001 and 2016, which include information on library activities that is very similar in structure and content to other libraries’ reports. Since 2017, the UGR library has replaced the yearbook with an infographic.

6o Awards, prizes and certificates. Some websites have a section on quality that includes information on quality certificates and even on the development of assessment processes in various years (US). Under the header “Assessment”, the UGR explains the steps it has taken to attain EFQM certification (400 points in 2010; and 500 in 2012, 2014 and 2016). This library has ISO 9001 certification (2015) and is also the only Spanish library to have received the Ibero-American Quality Award (Ibero-American Foundation for Quality, FUNDIBEQ), in 2013.

Other libraries (UB, UCA, US, UVA, UGR) that are committed to excellence have also received the EFQM 5000 quality certificate, which shows their interest in following a quality assurance system, validated according to the model they apply. Although the most widespread certification model is the EFQM, some libraries (UAB, UHU, UJI, URV) have opted for ISO 9000 certification. We also found several quality certificates issued by ANECA between 2004 and 2006.

7p Budget. Economic information is the least transparent, probably for reasons that are already known: the lack of this information and how hard it is to access. Only a small number of libraries provide information about the budget in a specific document. It is more common to find budget information in the report (48% of the total), although not all libraries give comprehensive (or even similar) information on this topic. Budget information may also be found as part of other documents, depending on the criteria that each library decides to apply. Some libraries (UAB, UAM, UB, UdL, UEX, ULPGC, UNIZAR, UPC, UPF, UPN, UPO, US) choose to only provide information on expenditure; others detail items corresponding to revenue, expenditure and investments. An example of good practise is the UNED, as it provides exhaustive information on library service expenditure, although limited to the five-year period 2010–2015.

As in the organisation chart and the scorecard, some libraries such as the UM do not allow access to budget-related documents unless you have a password.

7q Contracts. Information on contracts is even less transparent than that on the budget. The UB library is the only one that enables access to tender contracts and the current tenders for provision of information resources. For each tender, it provides information on the call for applications, the objective, the deadlines and the final decision.

An exceptional case is the Transparency Portal of the UAM’s Education Library, because the library belongs to a faculty and because of the kind of information the portal provides. Its objective is “to provide people with the information required for those who wish to learn in depth about its internal management”. The section “Contractor’s profile” contains information on public contracts for works, supplies, services and public service management, as well as economic and budget information.

8r Networks. To a varying extent, all libraries form part of at least one network or consortium. All state that they belong to REBIUN, some to the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) and others to regional consortiums like the Consortium of University Libraries of Andalusia (CBUA), the CSUC in Catalonia, or Madroño in Madrid.

Some libraries (UAL and US) show the logos of each of the networks to which they belong under the heading “Cooperation”. Other libraries include this information randomly in some areas of the website.

Beyond the above networks, libraries cooperate with a range of institutions (UCO with ANAHUAC of the University of Mexico, and with Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education, Mexico; the UMA with the National Library of Korea, etc.). Others are members of thematic networks such as C17 (Catalogue of Periodical Publications in Spanish Health Sciences Libraries); DOCUMAT (Network of Mathematics Libraries); and MECANO (Spanish Collective Catalogue of Periodicals on Engineering, Informatics and Technology).

To the catalogue of consortiums or cooperation groups mentioned above, we should add: LIBER, RECOLECTA,

Table 2: Presence of Each One of the Indicators Associated with Transparency in Spanish Public University Libraries.

Information areas	Indicators	Libraries	Percentage
(1) Purpose of the service and objectives	a. Definition of the mission	35	70%
	b. Strategic plan	24	48%
(2) Governing bodies and operation regulations	c. Members of the library committee	13	26%
	d. Regulations	47	94%
	e. Specific regulations for services	42	84%
	f. Charter of users' rights and responsibilities	21	42%
(3) Services offered	g. Service charter	39	78%
(4) Information resources	h. Policy/programme of collection management	9	18%
	i. Institutional policy of open access	14	28%
(5) Staff	j. Organisation chart	21	42%
	k. Staff directory	38	76%
(6) Results	l. Management indicators or scorecard	24	48%
	m. Satisfaction surveys	26	52%
	n. Annual report	34	68%
	o. Awards and prizes	17	34%
	p. Budget	24	48%
(7) Financial information	q. Tendered contracts and calls	1	2%
	r. Networks with which the library works	37	74%

GEIUN, DART, OCLC, the UNIRIS purchasing group, groups, associations and professional bodies, as well as national institutions with which universities or their libraries are closely linked (See Table 2).

5 Conclusions

The purpose of this analysis was not to categorise or classify university libraries, but to contribute to the dissemination of transparency as a management tool. Some libraries do not provide information about these indicators, but this does not mean that they do not consider them. However, it would be a move towards greater transparency if the presence of these indicators on library websites was considered a way of accounting for library management.

The degree of transparency must be assessed to ensure accountability to the public. Although public university libraries provide information on their organisational model to validate their management, this information is hard to find on websites and may be incomplete or out of date. Hence, although there are examples of good practises relating to each of the proposed indicators, public university libraries do not comply with all the established indicators of transparency. Therefore, both the visibility and accessibility of documents should be improved.

It is clear from this study that documents associated with the analysed indicators help to facilitate an assessment of the efficacy and efficiency of libraries.

No information area was covered by all the libraries, except Area 2, Governing bodies and operation regulations. This information area includes two indicators that were present on most websites: Library regulations (94%) and Specific regulations for services (84%), which are essential to ensure a library's activity. In contrast, the indicator corresponding to the members of the library committee was found on the third lowest number of websites (26%). It may be that there is little interest in making this information visible as is not strongly related to commitments.

The distribution of the rest of the information areas varied. Area 3 on Services offered, which has just one indicator, the service charter, was present on many websites (78%).

The presence of indicators of Area 5 on Staff was also uneven. The Directory, which facilitates users' communication with the library, was present on 76% of the library websites. In contrast, the organisation chart, with information of a more committed nature, was present on just 42% of the library websites under analysis.

None of the indicators associated with essential aspects such as the Purpose of the service and objectives (Area 1) were present on at least 75% of websites. The

absence of this indicator is surprising, as explaining the purpose of the service and objectives avoids generating false expectations among users and fosters the development of quality and the services that are provided. In some cases, we could consider that this information is obvious and well-known, but not to the extent that it does not need to be provided.

Indicators of the economic area were found on a low number of websites. Only 32% of the libraries published them, and as part of the activities report rather than in a specific document. Generally, activities reports do not contain all the relevant information and sections on this area. Exceptions to this were the UAM Education Library, which dedicates a large section to economic information, and the UB's CRAI, which presents tender contracts.

Although numerous gaps were found in the presence of transparency-associated indicators in the libraries that were analysed, the results were considerably better than those presented in previous studies, such as that on the Madroño consortium.

Out of the 50 libraries analysed, only two disseminated information on most of the 18 proposed indicators of transparency. The UB had 17 indicators on its website, followed by the UAB with 16. Nineteen libraries provided information on between 10 and 15 indicators. The common denominator of these 21 libraries is that they have introduced quality systems for management. As shown by studies cited in this paper, libraries that have quality certificates, some of which are members of the group of "Libraries for excellence", and generally have a positive correlation between their own quality instruments (service charters, scorecards, strategic planning, etc.) and transparency, as both are indispensable to the accountability process.

The largest group (25 libraries) had between five and 10 indicators on their websites. Only four libraries had under five indicators. In this group, one library had none of the indicators on its website. To improve this situation, incentives to compliance may be required, with awards and rankings as a form of promotion, as occurs with local corporations, for example.

Clearly, the quantity and quality of information available for consultation on library websites needs to be reviewed. There is a certain contradiction between one of the most important functions of a university library—to provide quality information for its users—and the information that libraries disseminate about themselves, which is often obsolete and organised according to criteria that are not easy to understand. Another argument supports this statement and is intrinsic to the culture of transparency: all services and entities that are financed with public funds must explain to the public the principles that

govern their management and the results that are obtained. However, libraries as services that are dependent on the university would not be obliged to render accounts; instead it is the university as an institution that is expressly referred to in the legislation.

As stated by Malaret (2017), these reflections lead to two unavoidable questions on transparency that should be resolved urgently. The first refers to the type of information institutions should post on their websites and the legal relevance of this information. The second relates to the debate on the concepts of good governance and open governance. The objective of both is to promote integrity, transparency and accountability.

To conclude, library staff should be trained specifically on technical aspects and on values linked to compliance with open government and institutional integrity practises.

Appendix

List of acronyms of Spanish universities (source: IUNE 2018. http://www.iune.es/es_ES/glosario/listado-universidades)

EHU	Universidad del País Vasco
UA	Universidad de Alicante
UAB	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
UAH	Universidad de Alcalá de Henares
UAL	Universidad de Almería
UAM	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
UB	Universitat de Barcelona
UBU	Universidad de Burgos
UC3M	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
UCA	Universidad de Cádiz
UCLM	Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha
UCM	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
UCO	Universidad de Córdoba
UDC	Universidad de A Coruña
UdG	Universitat de Girona
UdL	Universitat de Lleida
UGR	Universidad de Granada
UHU	Universidad de Huelva
UIB	Universidad de las Illes Balears
UIMP	Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo
UJAEN	Universidad de Jaén
UJI	Universitat Jaume I de Castelló
ULL	Universidad de La Laguna
ULPGC	Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
UM	Universidad de Murcia
UMA	Universidad de Málaga
UMH	Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche
UNAVARRA	Universidad Pública de Navarra
UNED	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
UNEX	Universidad de Extremadura
UNICAN	Universidad de Cantabria

UNILEÓN	Universidad de León
UNIOVI	Universidad de Oviedo
UNIRIOJA	Universidad de La Rioja
UNIZAR	Universidad de Zaragoza
UPC	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
UPCT	Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena
UPF	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
UPM	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
UPO	Universidad Pablo de Olavide
UPV	Universidad Politécnica de Valencia
URJC	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos
URV	Universitat Rovira i Virgili
US	Universidad de Sevilla
USAL	Universidad de Salamanca
USC	Universidad de Santiago de Compostela
UV	Universidad de Valencia
UVA	Universidad de Valladolid
UVIGO	Universidad de Vigo

References

- AEVAL (Agencia Estatal de Evaluación de las Políticas Públicas y la Calidad de los Servicios y Consejo de Transparencia y Buen Gobierno). 2016. *Metodología de Evaluación y Seguimiento de la Transparencia de la Actividad Pública (MESTA)*. Madrid: Ministry of Finance and Public Administration. https://www.aeval.es/difusion_y_comunicacion/publicaciones/Informes/Informes_de_Evaluacion/Evaluaciones_2016/E42.html (accessed March 7, 2019).
- Balagué, N. 2007. "Consolidando la Calidad en las Bibliotecas Universitarias: Evaluaciones, Sellos, Diplomas y Certificaciones." *El Profesional de la Información* 16 (4): 338–42. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2007.jul.2006>.
- Balanced Scorecard Institute. 2017. *Balanced Scorecard Basics*. <https://www.balancedscorecard.org/BSC-Basics/About-the-Balanced-Scorecard> (accessed February 18, 2019).
- Bielavitz, T. 2010. "The Balanced Scorecard: A Systemic Model for Evaluation and Assessment of Learning Outcomes?" *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 5 (2): 35–46. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://es.search.yahoo.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1052&context=ulib_fac (accessed February 18, 2019).
- Burke, S. K. 2016. "Public Library Administration: Transparency on the Website." *The Library Quarterly* 86 (4): 449–67.
- Codina, L. 2000. "Evaluación de Recursos Digitales en Línea: Conceptos, Indicadores y Métodos." *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 23 (1): 9–44.
- Cox, J. 2018. *Positioning the Academic Library Within the Institution: A Literature Review*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/13614533.2018.1466342?scroll=top&needAccess=true> (accessed February 18, 2019).
- De la Mano, M., and C. Creaser. 2016. "The Impact of the Balanced Scorecard in Libraries: From Performance Measurement to Strategic Management." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 48 (2): 191–208.
- Dervin, B., and K. Clark. 1987. *ASQ: Asking Significant Questions. Alternative Tools for Information Need and Accountability Assessments by Libraries*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED286519.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2019).
- Duque, Daza J. 2013. "Accountability y Gestión Pública: El Papel del Control y Rendición de Cuentas en la Gestión de lo Público." *Revista Ciencias Estratégicas* 22 (30): 226. <https://revistas.upb.edu.co/index.php/cienciasestrategicas/article/viewFile/2655/2305> (accessed February 20, 2019).
- Farrell, M. 2016. "Transparency." *Journal of Library Administration* 56 (4): 444–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2016.1157426> (accessed June 20, 2019).
- Fox, J. 2007. "The Uncertain Relationship between Transparency and Accountability." *Development in Practice* 17 (4–5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469955>.
- Gaventa, J., and R. McGee. 2013. "The Impact of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives." *Development Policy Review* 31 (1): s3–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12017> (accessed June 20, 2019).
- Hermosa del Vasto, P., F. J. Alcaraz Quiles, and E. Urquía Grande. 2017. "Transparencia Pública y Rendición de Cuentas Como Base para la Construcción de una Sociedad Democrática en América Latina." *Revista Internacional Transparencia e Integridad* 4. <https://revistainternacionaltransparencia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/9.-Paola-Hermosa-y-otros.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2019).
- Herrera-Morillas, J. L. 2013. "La Gestión de la colección en las Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas. Planes y Normativas: la Selección." *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 36 (4): e021.
- Herrera-Morillas, J.-L., A. Castillo-Díaz, and M. Pérez-Pulido. 2014. "Responsabilidad Social y Sostenibilidad en las Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas." *El Profesional de la Información* 23 (2): 134–43.
- Jiménez Piano, M., and V. Ortiz-Repiso Jiménez. 2007. *Evaluación y calidad de sedes web*. Madrid: Trea.
- Kann-Christensen, N., and J. Andersen. 2009. "Developing the Library: Between Efficiency, Accountability and Forms of Recognition." *Journal of Documentation* 65 (2): 208–22.
- Lessick, S. 2016. "Tooling up to Facilitate Findability, Virtual Collaboration, and Storytelling with Data." *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 104 (4): 354–62.
- Mabillard, V., and R. Zumofen. 2016. "The Complex Relationship between Transparency and Accountability: A Synthesis and Contribution to Existing Frameworks." *Public Policy and Administration* 32 (2): 110–29.
- Malaret, E. 2017. "Bon Govern, Transparència i Rendició de Comptes. Reforçant i Completant la Legitimitat Democràtica dels Poders Públics." *Revista Catalana de Dret Públic* 55: 23–47.
- Martín-Cavanna, J., and E. Barrio. 2017. *Examen de Transparencia. Informe de transparencia voluntaria en la web de las universidades españolas 2016*. Madrid: Fundación Compromiso y Transparencia.
- Ministerio de la Presidencia. 2013. *Ley 19/2013 de 9 de diciembre, de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información Pública y Buen Gobierno*. <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2013-12887> (accessed February 20, 2019).
- Osman, Z. 2004. *Accountability in Library Management: Issues & Strategies for the 21st Century*. <https://rizal.lib.admu.edu.ph/riconflibmgt/PDF/zaiton.pdf> (accessed February 20, 2019).
- Pacios, A. R. 2016. "Universidades Transparentes con Bibliotecas Transparentes." *Investigación Bibliotecológica* 30 (70): 105–28.
- Pacios, A. R., and M. Pérez-Píriz. 2018. "La Misión en las Bibliotecas Nacionales Europeas. Análisis y Pertinencia." *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 41 (4): e219.

- Pacios, A. R., B. Rodríguez Bravo, M. Vianello, C. Rey Martín, and C. Rodríguez-Parada. 2018. "Transparencia en la Gestión de las Bibliotecas Públicas del Estado a Través de sus Sedes Web." *El Profesional de la Información* 27 (1): 721–9.
- Pinto Molina, M., N. Balagué Mola, and L. M. Anglada i de Ferrer. 2007. "Evaluación y Calidad en las Bibliotecas Universitarias: Experiencias Españolas Entre 1994–2006." *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 30 (3): 364–83.
- REBIUN. 1999. *Normas y directrices para bibliotecas universitarias y científicas*, 2nd ed. Madrid: Ministry of Education and Culture.
- Rey Martín, C., and C. Rodríguez Parada. 2002. "Reflexions sobre la Mesura de la Qualitat en la Biblioteca." *Item* 32: 57–67. <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Item/article/view/22583/22417> (accessed February 20, 2019).
- Rey Martín, C., and C. Rodríguez-Parada. 2018. "Anàlisi del nivell de transparència de les biblioteques catalanes a través del web." In *15es. Jornades Catalanes de Documentació (Barcelona, May 10–11, 2018)*. <https://www.cobdc.net/15JCID/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Comu12.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2019).
- Rey Martín, C., C. Rodríguez-Parada, and E. Camón. 2019. "The Transparency of CSUC Member University Libraries." *Library Management* 40 (8/9): 558–69.
- Simón-Martín, J., A. Arias-Coello, and C. Simón-Blas. 2016. "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Spanish University Libraries." *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 39 (3): e142.
- Simón-Martín, J., C. Simón-Blas, and A. Arias-Coello. 2016. "Ranking de las Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas en la Gestión del Persona." *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 39 (1): e119.
- Solimine, G. 2010. "La Gestión del Cambio: Cultura y Metodología de Management en la Biblioteca." In *Gestión y Planificación en Bibliotecas*, Argentina: Alfabrama Ediciones.
- Sturges, P. 2008. "Corruption, Transparency and a Role for Libraries." *Innovation* 37. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/innovation.v37i1.42724> (accessed June 20, 2019).
- Sturges, P., and V. Crnogorac. 2012. "The Library and Transparency." *Alexandria* 23 (1): 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.7227/ALX.23.1.6> (accessed June 20, 2019).
- Taylor, M., and F. Heath. 2012. "Assessment and Continuous Planning: The Key to Transformation at the University of Texas Libraries." *Journal of Library Administration* 52 (5): 424–35.
- Vasconcellos Leão Lyrio, M., and R. João Lunkes. 2018. "Thirty Years of Studies on Transparency, Accountability and Corruption in the Public Sector: The State of the Art and Opportunities for Future Research." *Public Integrity* 20: 512–33.
- Wright, J. 2013. "ALA Calls for Accountability and Transparency in Nation's Surveillance Laws." *College & Research Libraries News* 74 (7): 376.