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Science, Technology, and Library Work: Trends and Milestones

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Forsman – Abstract:

Nowadays it is difficult to imagine, what kind of changes research libraries have gone through during the last 40 years. In the 70's libraries were proud of large collections of printed books and journals. Library automation was mostly in infancy, but some research fields were forerunners in developing library and information services. These fields are those that are economically useful in society. The first and most qualified international databases were in sciences like chemistry and physics, medicine, education and economics. Other sciences – like humanities and most of social sciences – were followers. Databases and different e-services were developed in the wake of the forerunners. Most milestones in libraries are connected with the development of information technology. These are e.g. international databases and information retrieval by modems, satellites, cd-rom, online, as well as library automation in making printed bibliographies, microcards, library catalogues, local lending services and libraries networking by the Internet. Science, technology and libraries are connected with each other supporting and creating new needs. Technological development gives both possibilities and challenges to libraries. Libraries with all the access to e-materials afford better tools to researchers to produce results and to make innovations. In academic libraries we need a more scientific approach to work. To meet better the needs of researchers, it is useful to know something about the character of research work and research process. When recruiting personnel in research libraries we have to look after having enough information specialists with deep knowledge of those sciences our library is responsible. The best situation is, if academic libraries have information specialists with doctoral education. This gives us better understanding to develop new research support services, like research data management, bibliometric services as well as support for publishing.