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# The use of marketing concepts in library services: a literature review

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Marketing supports the reaching of organizational goals by focusing on the identification and satisfaction of customer needs, thus it can also contribute considerably in achieving the objectives of non-profit organizations such as libraries. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the literature on the incorporation of marketing notions and the implementation of marketing techniques in library management. It reviews definitions, present different opposing views, marketing issues, social media and Web 2.0 and opinions on the adoption of marketing in a non-profit organization environment, and examines different successful examples of marketing implementation, concentrating on the gains resulting from such a move.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A thorough literature search on various databases and on various aspects of this topic was reviewed. The literature review is organised on emerging themes directly drawn from the literature, thematically and chronologically within each section. It aims to identify the changing perspectives, the current challenges, and the benefits offered by examining information science specialists' views. The main marketing concepts are identified throughout a strategic planning approach, which has been recommended as the most successful by the majority of researchers.

**Findings** – This paper examines and clarifies the existing misunderstandings and difficulties in library and information services marketing, and stresses the importance of its adoption in this contemporary competitive environment. It examines library marketing in six sections: misconceptions regarding library marketing, main challenges and reasons as to why the adoption of marketing concepts is an integral part of the strategic planning, reports on the international library organizations, provides a description of the implementation of strategic marketing and planning processes, presents some library marketing approaches and examines the contemporary technological opportunities for library marketing in the digital era, such as the use of Web 2.0 tools.

**Originality/value** – The paper broadens the library marketing literature by gathering researchers' scientific views and advice and identifies the main implementation concerns derived from the earlier and more recent relevant literature. Moreover, for the first time, IT records issues concerning library marketing, social media and Web 2.0.

**Keywords** Library management, Social media, Web 2.0, Library services, Information services, Library and information services, Library marketing concepts, Strategic library marketing, Marketing mix, Libraries, 7Ps, Library 2.0

**Paper type** Literature review



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## 1. Introduction

Marketing comes with a wide variety of definitions, all of them converging on the view that marketing is a customer-oriented strategic management process, which combines both a theoretical framework as well as a practical set of methods and techniques, for its realisation. Kotler (1972, p. 12) defines marketing as “the effective management by an organization of its exchange relationship with its various markets and publics”. Furthermore:

[...] marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services (Kotler Marketing Group, 2012, p. 1).

According to Yorke (1984, p. 17) marketing is more a “corporate philosophy” and a “market oriented organization is constantly attempting to match its resources, both current and accessible, to the needs of the market in order to achieve its corporate objectives”.

The most important concepts of marketing are:

[...] segmentation, targeting, positioning, needs, wants, demand, offerings, brands, value and satisfaction, exchange, transactions, relationships and networks, marketing channels, supply chain, competition, the marketing environment, and marketing programs. These terms make up the working vocabulary of the marketing professional (Kotler Marketing Group, 2012, p. 1).

Quite clearly, marketing assists an organisation in the process of quality products and services development, by taking first into account customers needs, aiming to increase product and services' awareness as well as their usage (Bushing, 1995; Arachchige, 2002a; Blackstead and Shoaf, 2002). Additionally, marketing can provide a range of useful tools aiming to determine and evaluate the appropriateness of the existing services and products of an organisation (Besant and Sharp, 2000; Martey, 2000; Schmidt, 2006; Andreasen and Kotler, 2007).

Kotler's (1982, p. 27) definition of marketing for non-profit organisations suggests that “is the skill of knowing how to plan and manage the organization's exchange relations with its various publics”. In their classic pioneering article, Kotler and Levy (1969) introduced the idea of expanding marketing thought, and theory in order “to incorporate marketing activities in public and non-profit organizations” (Lovelock and Weinberg, 1990, p. 3). The idea that the implementation of marketing can be equally successful for both business and non-profit organisations, on the one hand stirred up a lot of discussion and objections, whereas on the other attracted a lot of interest from the academic and researcher community. In the mid-1970s the interest in the applicability of that idea grew steadily and began to gain a growing number of supporters, until it reached a tipping point where, finally, marketing was accepted and recognised as equally valuable for both profit and non-profit organisations (Kotler, 1979; Lovelock and Weinberg, 1990). Even though marketing concepts can be applied to non-profit organisations, it should be taken into account that there might be possible variations in their implementation, depending on the context of operation of each organisation (Ojiambo, 1994).

A non-profit organisation, in order to take full advantage of the potential offered by the adoption of marketing concepts and fundamentals, should:

- comprehend marketing theory, realize the differences and distinguish marketing from selling, promotion, public relations, publicity and other functions or aspects that are part of the marketing process; and
- develop its marketing plan and organise the marketing strategy that will contribute to its efficiency and performance (Kotler, 1979; Ojiambo, 1994).

To conclude, the actual contribution of marketing implementation to non-profit organisations, is not only the development and maintenance of services to meet customer needs, but also the opportunity presented to differentiate themselves from their peers and to gain a prominent role in their arena of activities (Kotler, 1979; Andreassen and Kotler, 2007).

## 2. Methodology

Literature on the topic of LIS marketing exists since the 1970s. Gupta (2008) divided the existing bibliographies into four categories, namely: selective bibliographies that list bibliographical information, annotated bibliographies that contain descriptive or evaluative comments, webliographies that consist of web-based resources, and critical reviews of the literature. Annotated bibliographies (Norman, 1982, 1989; Cox, 2000; Hamilton-Pennell, 2002; Owens, 2002) present a particular interest as they include descriptive summaries of the sources. Journal articles and books are the main sources of information on the topic of LIS marketing. Additionally, other sources of information such newsletters and Internet resources exist (Gupta, 2007). However, Gupta (2008) suggests that there is scope for further research to include the growth of the literature, various literature formats, literature produced in various countries, research outputs and contributions of the related international organisations, associations and individuals.

The aim of the paper is to cover both earlier and current issues on library marketing by identifying the main library marketing concepts and the changing perspectives throughout its history and development. The paper provides an extensive and comprehensive literature review on marketing concepts used in library and information services. A shorter literature review was presented at the “2nd Biennial International Conference on Services Marketing” (Balabanidou *et al.*, 2009). The selected materials included journal articles, printed resources, books and know-how manuals, and web-based open source research articles. These were retrieved through various library and information science related databases such as Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, Library Literature and ERIC. Also, key databases for marketing were used, such as Emerald Full Text, Web of Science, JSTOR and ScienceDirect as well as Google Scholar. Information was gathered using Hellenic Academic Libraries LINK (HEAL LINK) ([www.heal-link.gr/](http://www.heal-link.gr/)), a Consortium of all the Greek Universities which provides access to many international publishers and information providers such as Emerald, Scopus, Elsevier, Springer, WilsonWeb as well as to e-books and conference proceedings series of IEEE, Elsevier, Emerald, Springer and Taylor & Francis. In order to retrieve the most relevant results, an initial bibliographic research strategy was undertaken using as basic keywords subject and thesaurus search terms such as “library and information services”, “library marketing concepts”, “strategic library marketing”, “marketing mix” and “7Ps”. The construction of a search string including a combination of keywords, subject and thesaurus terms, truncation and wildcard symbols, broadened the results.

There is a chronological and thematic coverage of the subject. Initially, the paper examines some general views on marketing theory and practice concerning non-profit organisations. The main core of the article has focused on the presentation of international literature related to the application of marketing concepts to library and information services. The main body is divided in six subsections aiming to discuss in detail each of the important issues that were identified through the literature review. It covers the use of marketing fundamental concepts in the library context by presenting the challenges, difficulties and benefits encountered in the process. Additionally it presents a description of the marketing process, core concepts and approaches, illustrated with practical implementation examples. Finally, contemporary library marketing techniques based on Web 2.0 and social networking are explored in order to enrich the paper with more current applications.

In detail:

- Subsection 3.1 examines misconceptions regarding library marketing and its most common application pitfalls.
- Subsection 3.2 identifies the main challenges and reasons as to why the adoption of marketing concepts is useful for libraries, and forms an integral part of the strategic planning in the contemporary competitive environment.
- Subsection 3.3 reports on the international library organisations and their contribution in the provision of consultation and advocacy for the adoption of marketing.
- Subsection 3.4 provides a description of the implementation of strategic marketing and planning process, as well as of its core concepts.
- Subsection 3.5 presents some library marketing approaches.
- Subsection 3.6 examines the contemporary technological opportunities for library marketing in the digital era, such as the use of Web 2.0 tools.

Finally, conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of marketing in the library and information services sector, are provided.

### 3. Marketing concepts in the library context

The following section reviews the literature on marketing library and information services. Early writings on marketing services can be traced back in the 1960s and 1970s (McCarthy, 1964), however, it was during the 1980s that marketing was established as a new academic field (Berry and Parasuraman, 1995). Initially, marketing was primarily used for profit-making purposes. The concept of marketing non-profit organisations was initially introduced by Kotler and Levy (1969). However, in the early days marketing was considered to form part of a managerial process outside the boundaries of library science and librarians were reluctant to use it (Lovelock and Weinberg, 1990; Cronin, 1992; Weingand, 1999; Sass, 2002; Gupta, 2003; Schwamm *et al.*, 2009). Marketing services has “witnessed an incredible growth of interest in non-profit service providers such as libraries” during the past two decades (Kim and Park, 2006). During the 1970s, the majority of the published articles on marketing mainly addressed issues relating to publicity, advertising and public relations (Kies, 1987; Cronin, 1992; Morgan, 1998; Koontz *et al.*, 2006). “Books and articles about marketing libraries were comparatively rare” during this early period (Koontz *et al.*, 2006, p. 225).

Renborg (1997, p. 2) presents a historical review of marketing library services, dating back more than a century, suggesting that “marketing is not a new library activity”. She argues that marketing library services has its roots in Samuel Swett Green’s quoted speech at the ALA Conference in 1876. Kies (1987, p. 18) also mentions Green’s “early example of marketing thinking”, which was giving prominence to “users’ interests and needs”.

In the early 1970s, librarians and information specialists began to consider that marketing their library according to their users needs could contribute both towards the fulfillment of the overall library objectives and the improvement of the existing services (Koontz *et al.*, 2006). Gupta (2003, p. 99), in a brief historical account, suggests that the changes noticed in the use of the “marketing concept” in library and information services indicate a shift from the “selling concept” to the “product development” and finally to the “customer focused concept”. Wood and Young (1988) defined in detail the concepts/orientations (“production”, “selling” and “marketing” orientation) regarding this “historical progression”. They argued that the “product” or “production” orientation is based on the development of quality products or services (like information systems designing or collection development) without, however, determining user satisfaction. The “selling” concept was defined as a company oriented approach that could assist an organisation to convince customers to buy or use its offered products or services without taking into account their needs. Essentially, the “marketing” orientation was described as the only customer-focused approach that would depend on the mutual exchange and long-term interaction of the organisation with its customers. Therefore, the effective adoption of the marketing concept will reinforce libraries to take over not only “the reactive role of responding to apparent community needs” but also “the active role of studying and analysing such needs” (Wood and Young, 1988, p. 7).

Koontz *et al.* (2006) presented in chronological order hundreds of publications addressing the issue of library marketing applications. The paper documents the constant growth of the related body of literature, which became more apparent from the mid-1970s onward. Rowley (2003) indicates that related literature includes mostly how-to guides and case studies. Efforts aiming at implementing marketing strategies to different library types also have been made worldwide (Balabanidou *et al.*, 2009). Articles documenting the application of marketing principles in libraries are also produced in developing countries like Ghana (Martey, 2000), Sri Lanka (Arachchige, 2002a; Block and Edzan, 2002), Botswana (Nkanga, 2002) and Kenya (Kavulya, 2004). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that publications on library marketing have not only increased in number but also have become more specialized.

### *3.1 Misconceptions and library marketing application pitfalls*

This section examines the misconceptions and common marketing application pitfalls. Many authors have discussed librarians’ reluctance to employ marketing techniques (frequently equated with promotion, publicity, advertising and public relations) (Ojiambo, 1994; Bushing, 1995; Rowley, 1995; Weingand, 1995; Savard, 1996; Kavulya, 2004; Naqvi, 2004; Adeyoyin, 2005; Koontz *et al.*, 2006). Bushing (1995, p. 1) pointed out that the basic reason that inhibits libraries from an efficient and effective marketing implementation, is librarians’ failure to understand marketing theory and applications. Because they equate marketing with other related aspects, such as promotional activities, they fail to recognize marketing’s basic processes and

disagree upon the marketing concept, which focuses on the importance of satisfying customer needs.

Kumbar (2004, p. 4) also commented that most librarians are not comfortable with marketing processes and listed a number of common marketing application pitfalls like: obsolete models and traditional stereotypes regarding library operation and librarian's job, role and image, lack of training and education in marketing tools and techniques; the passive stance towards users and their information needs; the complexity of the marketing tasks; and the lack of funds either as a reason or as an excuse.

Many librarians still tend to associate marketing with profit, resulting in their reluctance to employ it as a tool (Weingand, 1999; Sass, 2002; Gupta, 2003; Shontz *et al.*, 2004; Garoufallou *et al.*, 2009). A remarkable example is Rossouw's (2001) article, in which he expressed his arguments opposing the adoption of the market model by the university libraries. Besant and Sharp (2000) have characterised traditional library marketing methods as "transactional" and they recommended the implementation of a relationship marketing approach instead. Library marketing approaches are discussed in Subsection 3.5.

### *3.2 The necessity of marketing in contemporary library services*

This section considers librarians' and researchers' views on the main challenges that make the application of marketing concepts in library services a necessity. Libraries, nowadays, are faced with revolutionary technological changes concerning their service development and provision. Many authors emphasise the need for adaptation to the digital environment, which has created a more demanding user culture for all library types worldwide (Dodsworth, 1998; Gambles and Schuster, 2003; Gupta, 2003; Wakeham, 2004; Garoufallou *et al.*, 2008; Schwamm *et al.*, 2009). Internet through user-friendly interfaces offers a more easily and immediately available variety of information choices (Morgan, 1998; Neuhaus and Snowden, 2003; Wakeham, 2004; Broady-Preston *et al.*, 2006; Schmidt, 2006). This new information environment has created a situation in which, libraries no longer hold their role and place in this environment, by "birth right". Instead they need to make a greater effort to improve services, in terms of quality as much as in forms of delivery, in order to convince people to use them, instead of turning to alternative information providers (Morgan, 1998). Rowley (1995) argues that the adoption of marketing could assist libraries in their struggle to survive in the emerging and increasingly competitive information environment.

In addition, financial difficulties and budget restrictions create further pressure, requiring libraries to defend their existence and reconsider their role. Under-utilisation of libraries that derives from lack of understanding community needs, has resulted in "inappropriate" provision of information services, leading users to alternative information sources (Prabha and Bolander, 2000; Arachchige, 2002a). Librarians need to break free of their stereotype role that limits them to collection management and be able to offer value-added services based on identified user needs and expectations (Gupta, 2003; Naqvi, 2004). Strategic marketing and planning offer a variety of tools, like user satisfaction surveys, environmental scanning and segmentation that can contribute to this effort (Morgan, 1998; Kassel, 1999; Weingand, 1999; Prabha and Bolander, 2000; Cullen, 2001; De Sáez, 2002; Kendrick, 2006). Moreover, the use of feedback methods enables the re-evaluation and monitoring of services (Ojiambo, 1994; Arachchige, 2002a).

An important issue in this discussion, involves the library image, how people perceive libraries and librarians. Undoubtedly, as Leisner (1995, p. 1) pointed out, "a library is much more than just a building full of books". Personal contact with library staff is an essential factor that predetermines users' perceptions regarding the library (Leisner, 1995; Shamel, 2002). Shamel (2002, p. 3) identified a number of negative public impressions of librarians namely "passivity, incompetence, bureaucratic tendencies, unworldliness, and insufficient education or subject knowledge for the job". Helton and Esrock (1998) noted that depiction of stereotype librarians in TV series and movies make the situation worse, whereas Bargmann (2007) illustrates the situation by providing a detailed list of characters from books and films outlining the extent of those negative views. Another important issue is branding. The idea or image of a library service that users connect with, and with which they identify the name of the library or library service, the logo and the slogan, the particular design of the library that owns the idea, image or service. Few libraries have managed, to build a brand name and to be recognizable worldwide. Branding is also very important on the web as it allows libraries to reach a wider range of audiences. Rossiter (2008) and Potter (2012) discussed issues of branding in libraries.

Attributes, such as friendliness and positive attitude, willingness to assist and the use of casual language and friendly information tools in personal communication with users, can provide great assistance in making the library's physical environment more familiar, and in creating a better public image (Helton and Esrock, 1998; Neuhaus and Snowden, 2003; Schmidt, 2006; Bargmann, 2007). Furthermore, training sessions on library marketing and promotion and effective communication strategies and techniques on service provision are recommended (Savard, 1988; Mohamedali, 1999; Schmidt, 2006). Ketner (2005, p. 15) suggests that libraries could learn from the application of the marketing strategies in the bookstores, in their quest to attract and satisfy their clients, and indicates that "people appreciate not just polite service, but individualised service from the staff". Ojiambo (1994) also recommended the application of marketing techniques for the improvement of the library image as well as for the enhancement of the information profession status.

Many authors observed that the users neither appreciate nor realize the tasks involved in the librarian's profession. Librarians should take seriously into account that in most of the times users limit the librarians' role to the basic library activities of checking in or out and shelving books (Shamel, 2002; Ennis, 2006b; Bargmann, 2007). Therefore, they do not take full advantage of all the available services or they take them for granted (Rowley, 1995; Prabha and Bolander, 2000; Brodsky, 2003; Ennis, 2006b; Spalding and Wang, 2006; Bargmann, 2007). Thus, training librarians in marketing issues should be a priority for libraries (Savard, 1988, 1996, 2001). Spalding and Wang (2006, p. 496) mention that lack of awareness and understanding lead to librarian's role within the campus community being undervalued as well as not appreciated. It also became apparent that users were totally unaware of financial issues like the fact that "it takes a sizeable budget to maintain library facilities, purchase and license rights to collections, and hire staff with specialized expertise". Arachchige (2002a, p. 4) suggests that in such cases, action should be taken, and issues like "whether the resources available in the library are properly used" and "whether the library can rationalize its expenditure matching the information supply and user demand" should be examined.

Moreover, it is also important for libraries to identify the information needs of non-users as well (Ojiambo, 1994; Arachchige, 2002a). Many authors believe that due to

insufficient awareness and advertising, a considerable number of people do not use library resources and show no interest in using them, preferring other information sources (Helton and Esrock, 1998; Arachchige, 2002a, b; Neuhaus and Snowden, 2003; Adeyoyin, 2005; Schmidt, 2006). Marketing, public relations and promotional activities should target both users and non-users, creating awareness regarding the potential use of the available library resources and services, and provide assurances of their capability to provide them with the required information (Ojiambo, 1994; Arachchige, 2002a).

*3.3 The international library organisations' contribution in marketing implementation*  
This section examines the role of international library organisations, mostly American and British, and their efforts to employ marketing techniques (Savard, 1988; Gupta, 2003; Balabanidou *et al.*, 2009; Garoufallou *et al.*, 2009). The organisations that have played a significant part in the implementation of marketing include: the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux (ASLIB), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK) and the Ohio Library Council (OLC) (Savard, 1988, 2001).

Most of them offer support to all library types (public, school, academic and special) while some focus on a specific type. In order to assist libraries in their adoption of marketing activities they collect and disseminate the best “how-to” practices or create and publish manuals, training guides, toolkits or newsletters, organise conferences, workshops and training seminars, provide free online databases with useful information, ideas and resources on marketing strategies (Gupta, 2003; Balabanidou *et al.*, 2009).

In 1997, the IFLA Professional Board (IFLA, 2012) established its Management and Marketing section for all libraries due to the growing interest in library management and marketing issues. However, the most popular and widely accepted contribution was that of ALA that designed a guide entitled “@ your library” which is a public awareness and advocacy campaign, aimed to promote the value of all libraries in the USA (Shamel, 2002; ALA, 2012a). As worldwide interest increased, in collaboration with IFLA and other associations, the guide was broadened to become the “Campaign for the World’s Libraries”. Throughout the years the guide was customised and translated to be used in a more specialised way for various types of libraries in different regions around the world (Gupta, 2003; Schmidt, 2006; ALA, 2012a; IFLA, 2012).

ALA in collaboration with ACRL launched the “Marketing @ your library” as part of the successful “@ your library<sup>®</sup>” campaign. They created toolkits and workshops, tutorials including experiences, ideas and other useful marketing resources. The training and promotional material, the case studies, and the related information are provided for free at the ACRL’s web site (ALA, 2012b; ALA, ACRL, 2012). This campaign was very successful and many academic libraries have developed their own marketing strategies and promotional campaigns according to the guidelines’ suggestions (ACRL and Reynolds, 2003). Some international organisations like the OhioLINK have also followed these practical examples and used them to design their own toolkits including additional resources for effective marketing implementation (OhioLINK, 2012). Moreover, OLC provides online training material for public libraries marketing (OLC, 2012), while SLA offers training material to special libraries staff (Shamel, 2002).



### 3.4 The strategic marketing process and the marketing core concepts

The majority of manuals, how-to guides and related articles suggest the utilisation of a combined approach which interweaves marketing and strategic planning (Wood and Young, 1988; Coote and Bachelor, 1997; ACRL and Reynolds, 2003; Kavulya, 2004; Schmidt, 2006). The following section identifies and examines the core marketing concepts and processes.

According to Kavulya (2004, p. 119) the strategic marketing approach:

[...] is a management process that involves planning, requires analysis of customer needs and ways of satisfying those needs, and is geared towards mutual benefit for customers as well as the organization.

The “Marketing @ your library” campaign’s *Strategic Marketing* manual, depicts the four basic marketing planning steps, namely:

- (1) customer and market research (customer needs and customer view);
- (2) strategic library plan (vision and mission, products and services implementation);
- (3) promotion of the library (messages, vehicles, campaign implementation); and
- (4) providing products/services (delivery interaction adjustments) (ACRL and Reynolds, 2003, p. 11).

The core notion and main focus of marketing is satisfying the existing and future customers/users needs. Thus, the initial action should aim to identify these needs before introducing and designing library information services, as well as during the planning of the overall marketing process (Rowley, 1995; Coote and Bachelor, 1997; ACRL and Reynolds, 2003). Librarians use market research techniques to gather important information on users, which will assist them in gaining a better understanding on how to identify and analyse existing and future market needs (Coote and Bachelor, 1997; Morgan, 1998; Owens, 2002; ACRL and Reynolds, 2003). Additionally, employment of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis can achieve both an internal (organisational) and an external (of the competition) environmental analysis (Coote and Bachelor, 1997; Schmidt, 2006). All collected information will finally provide the foundation upon which the marketing plan will be modeled and developed (Nicholas, 1998).

As a result, the marketing plan is the tool that involves the process of choosing the activities that will determine the actual marketing planning (Nicholas, 1998). Schmidt (2006, p. 6) argues that the development and implementation of a marketing plan can help a library “identify what it wishes to market and how”. Naqvi (2004, p. 2) noted that a marketing plan may also “contribute to the library’s ability to find a proper place in the present as well as in the future and to fill that place by an optimal allocation of resources”. Moreover, Ennis (2006a, p. 2) supported the development of a “strategic and focused marketing plan that has clear goals” in conjunction with reliable services, and characterised it as “a powerful tool for any kind of library anywhere”. Other authors provide more practical information on how a library could create its own marketing plan (Dodsworth, 1998; Kassel, 1999). Notably, Dodsworth (1998) emphasised the necessity of a comprehensive written marketing plan and indicated four basic traditional marketing planning activities, namely, determining what to promote, defining the target audience, choosing the type of outreach and evaluating the program. Similarly, Kassel (1999) outlined seven more detailed steps that a library can follow to write a marketing plan

including preparing a mission statement, listing and describing target or niche markets, describing the existing services, spelling out marketing and promotional strategies, identifying and understanding the competition, establishing quantifiable marketing goals and monitoring the results carefully. In addition, some authors paid attention to market orientation and service performance (Harris, 2000; Sen, 2006, 2010; Singh, 2009b), the leadership and market orientation (Harris and Ogbonna, 2001), the organisational barriers, to organisational culture, leadership for libraries and customer orientation (Savard, 1996; Lozano, 2000; Singh, 2009b).

Segmentation, which is considered to be the first and most important strategic part of the marketing planning process, is used to determine the basic target groups, to whom each library will address its services and, therefore, its promotional efforts (Dodsworth, 1998; Helton and Esrock, 1998; Ewers and Austen, 2004). Coote and Bachelor (1997) noted that “correct segmentation is the basis of the entire marketing strategy”. Following steps include setting the marketing program goal and objectives, according to the basic organisational mission, followed by detailed outline of an action plan.

The traditional action plan consists of the four “marketing mix” elements known also as 4Ps (product – price – place – promotion) (Coote and Bachelor, 1997). The Marketing mix is the concept of identifying a number of policies to be adopted by managers to suit consumers’ needs in providing marketing strategies (Palmer, 2004). Many libraries tried to adopt and adjust these elements as a part of a complete marketing process while others have used them as performance measurement indicators, resulting in the development of a more effective and efficient marketing campaign (Wood and Young, 1988; Arachchige, 2002b; Blackstead and Shoaf, 2002; Ewers and Austen, 2004; Naqvi, 2004).

The elements of marketing mix adjusted to a library environment, illustrated by some examples (Coote and Bachelor, 1997; Weingand, 1999; Blackstead and Shoaf, 2002; Owens, 2002) are listed below:

- *Product*. The services, the resources and programs offered;, e.g. reference services, loans, opening hours, website, books, journals collections, e-sources, databases, printers, training, seminars (Ewers and Austen, 2004; Breivik and Gee, 2006; Saunders, 2008; Balabanidou *et al.*, 2009).
- *Price*. The tangible or intangible price or cost paid to use the library services, resources and programmes;, e.g. tangible: taxes, fees or fines/intangible: indirect costs, time spent to find specific information, the kind of experience when using the library. Libraries could adopt a pricing policy for different types of services (Jose and Bhat, 2007 p. 25.).
- *Place*. Where and how are the services made available and the users are served;, e.g. at a library department, by telephone, online from the library’s website or from a digital library.
- *Promotion*. The way in which a library advertises its services and the methods-tools used to inform the public. Promotion includes: public relations, advertising, publicity and personal communication. Additional tools can be used such as brochures, leaflets, posters, newsletters, user orientation seminars, book presentations/exhibitions, announcements on press and local media (Ewers and Austen, 2004; Jose and Bhat, 2007).

Weingand (1999, p. 4) indicates that Kotler's 4Ps should "be expanded to 6Ps" including two more important components (Ps): the "marketing audit", referred as "prelude", and the "evaluation", as "postlude". Furthermore, it is recommended that the more specialized and broadened "7Ps of Service Marketing mix", which includes three more elements-Ps, could be applicable in library services (Coote and Bachelor, 1997; Ewers and Austen, 2004):

- (1) *People*. The library staff (reference department). The way in which they communicate, behave and serve users plays a decisive role, affects the service quality, and creates positive or negative perceptions towards the library. Specific attributes of staff behaviour include educational qualifications, professional experience, appearance, polite behaviour, willingness to assist, communication skills, quickness in service delivery, efficiency, etc. (Dewdney and Ross, 1994; Jardine, 1995; Radford, 2006; Kuruppu, 2007).
- (2) *Physical evidence*. The impressions created by the surrounding environment in which services are provided, depend on the specific facilities or virtual library environment attributes; e.g. clean and tidy facilities, buildings architecture, decoration, lighting, air-conditioning, quiet, technological equipment/accessibility, usability, operation, easy search and navigation performance (Ewers and Austen, 2004; Jose and Bhat, 2007).
- (3) *Processes*. The efficiency and effectiveness of human resources management and library operation to satisfy user needs; e.g. automation of loans and reference services, telephone assistance, online information services provision (Ask a Librarian) (Jose and Bhat, 2007).

Paying attention to marketing mix elements the library should create useful products and services aiming to assist the users (product); distribute library services through its various branches, understanding what the users want and where they want to use it (place); plan effective marketing strategies using the appropriate communication channels adopted by the users themselves (promotion – Web 2.0 tools nowadays); pay attention to personnel behavior and communication skills, information services skills, and train personnel accordingly (people); consider the environment as an important element strongly linked to user satisfaction and pay attention to both internal and external architecture, physical and virtual space (physical evidence); develop effective procedures, policies and flow of activities by paying attention to automation procedures and procedures that can be handled by the users themselves (process); and may charge specific types of services if necessary (price) (Zafeiriou *et al.*, 2012).

All the aforementioned activities such as the development of strategic planning, marketing strategies, and marketing mix should be coordinated and used for the achievement of the predetermined goal and the objectives, in order to achieve an appropriate implementation of a library strategic marketing plan in each individual case (Coote and Bachelor, 1997; Caballero, 2002; Schwamm *et al.*, 2009). Careful examination though should be paid on how the selected strategies can be developed and incorporated to a marketing plan according to the special needs of each individual library and its community. In this respect, Kassel (1999, p. 1) advised librarians: "before writing a marketing plan, it is necessary to define your target market and understand its needs [by] conducting market research".

The final action that ensures sustainability and efficient implementation of a marketing strategy is evaluation. According to Weingand (1999, p. 145) there are two different evaluation approaches: “the process or formative” and “the final or summative” evaluation. The process or formative evaluation is a regular activity which is used during the progress, in order to monitor the fulfillment of the library objectives and allows corrections and adjustments to the previous planning activities. On the other hand, the final or summative evaluation is related to the assessment and is used to determine whether or not an objective was achieved, and then decide if redefining and adjustments are needed.

### 3.5 Library marketing approaches

All specialised marketing implementation processes, techniques and tools that have been presented so far, were borrowed from the traditional marketing sector and were adapted to suit library needs and its users. Despite their successful implementation, criticism of traditional marketing models urged some researchers to explore new ways to manage the whole procedure (Owens, 2002). The following section explores some marketing approaches such as “relationship marketing” and “word of mouth marketing”.

Schmidt (2006, p. 1) argued that “Relationship marketing, in particular, reflecting the mutual interests of the libraries and the clients they serve is being seen as a concept for libraries to embrace”. Besant and Sharp (2000) recommended that traditional marketing methods should be abandoned and that relationship marketing should be used instead, as a concept concentrated on a more trustful and long term relationship between libraries and their users. Broady-Preston *et al.* (2006, p. 442) analysed the results of two surveys that have been conducted at the University of Malta Library in 2003-2004 and at the University of Coventry Library in 2005-2006, to explore the relationships between and library staff and users, where a customer relationship management (CRM) framework had been implemented. The aim of using CRM was “to maintain quality and to demonstrate worth”. Moreover, they noted that “librarians need to embrace positively the challenges of creating and sustaining relationships based on an active partnership with their customers”. In addition, Rowley (2003, p. 16) agreed that “if organisations do not create and hold customers, clients, users, or members, they undermine the reason for their existence”:

Word of mouth marketing was also considered as a powerful tool which depends on the sharing of real, honest and genuine opinions about something between people that know each other (Balabanidou *et al.*, 2009, p. 60).

Orava (1997, p. 1) pointed that it is inexpensive, easy to use and “takes care of the marketing to a great extent”. Alire (2007), more recently, provides a remarkable example of an effective word of mouth marketing technique application at the University of New Mexico University Libraries. She reported that its use changed very quickly their information and research services excellence reputation, as well as their collection excellence within the community. However, as Schmidt (2006, pp. 8-9) noted librarians have to be extremely cautious as long as “word of mouth is just as effective for spreading the word about good service as it is for bad”. She also mentioned that “good service frequently goes unremarked”.

### 3.6 Web 2.0, libraries and marketing

The term Web 2.0 was firstly introduced by O'Reilly in 2001. He states that:

Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation" (O'Reilly, 2007, p. 17).

Web 2.0 refers to a group of technologies where everyone is able to contribute content, creating a socially networked web environment (Anderson, 2007). Therefore, the web works like a shared network space that promotes, research, collaboration, education, entertainment and social activities (Storey, 2006).

Strategy guides illustrating examples on how businesses, harnessing the power of the web, can grow awareness of their brand, and become more profitable by taking advantage of the Web 2.0 applications, by creating on-line spaces where people come together to communicate, interact and exchange views and ideas (Brown, 2008; Shuen, 2008; Payton, 2009). The term Library 2.0 has also appeared in the literature, as Maness (2006) acknowledged that "Web 2.0 and libraries are well suited for marriage, and many librarians have recognized so". According to Maness (2006), the:

[...] best conception of Library 2.0 would be a social network interface that the user designs. It is a personalized OPAC that includes access to IM, RSS feeds, blogs, Wikis, tags, and public and private profiles within the library's network. It is virtual reality of the library, a place where one cannot only search for books and journals, but interact with a community, a librarian, and share knowledge and understanding with them.

In recent years there is an expanding literature on the topic of the implementation of the Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs, Wikis, social networking Websites, RSS and podcasting in libraries. Peltier-Davis (2012) produced a field guide on Web 2.0 tools and their applications for libraries and information centers. Libraries are using these tools to reach as many users as possible (Lee, 2006; Black and Kilzer, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Dale *et al.*, 2011) for educational reasons, sharing news, marketing their services and providing information literacy instruction (Stover, 2006; Lepik, 2007; Boxen, 2008; Morris and Allen, 2008; Robertson *et al.*, 2008; Adolphus, 2009; Schwamm *et al.*, 2009; Mahmood and Richardson, 2011; Anderson and Nelson, 2012). Boxen (2008, p. 21) reviewed the content of the related literature to "see which articles demonstrate a qualitative or quantitative benefit to the libraries where they are used". Joint (2010, p. 489) investigated the legal and ethical issues associated with Web 2.0 applications in libraries "providing recommendations about new principles of library and information practice which will help practitioners make better sense of these innovations in their overall information environment".

Several articles explored the application of Web 2.0 features in libraries worldwide. Han and Liu (2010) surveyed 38 top Chinese university libraries' web sites; Mahmood and Richardson (2011) investigated the adoption of Web 2.0 technologies in US academic libraries; Sawant (2012) studied the degree of knowledge and usage of Web 2.0 tools by LIS education in India; Nguyen (2008) surveyed the extent of Web 2.0 use in Australasian university libraries.

A recent IFLA publication based on its annual conference proceedings in Gothenburg focused mainly on marketing applications of Web 2.0 in libraries presenting examples and case studies in a variety library types and continents (Gupta and Savard, 2011). However, only a few articles link directly Web 2.0, libraries and marketing, as it is a relatively new area of interest.

According to Breeding (2010) the use of Twitter and Face book as marketing tools “creates momentum of activity toward the organization’s web presence and strategic services”. The key challenge involves cultivating a critical mass of interest on the social networking site that can be leveraged for marketing and promotion”. He also ranks RSS as one of the top technologies for distributing content” and suggests that librarians should “think of RSS as a syndication service to distribute content as well as an advertising ploy to entice potential users to visit your web site”. Nguyen (2008) also found that RSS is the most widely used technology utilized by Australasian university libraries. Furthermore, Harinarayana and Raju’s (2010) research revealed that RSS feeds are the most commonly used application for dissemination of library news, events and announcements.

According to Nesta and Mi (2011, p. 92), Facebook, as a marketing tool, can provide:

[...] a savvy firm with feedback, serving as a free, daily focus group that must be immensely valuable. Some focus on their customers’ comments, others present static, advertisement-like posts from company headquarters and others interact with their users.

Rogers (2009, pp. 5-6) surveyed how American libraries use Web 2.0 technologies for public relations in order to attract new users, namely, which types of Web 2.0 applications are used to promote and market library services; respondents rate each Web 2.0 tools’ effectiveness toward achieving library marketing campaign; if Web 2.0 tools are important for marketing and promoting library services; and for what various purposes are Web 2.0 tools used. Respondents perceived that Web 2.0 applications are important for marketing and that blogs, online video, and instant messaging are the most effective tools. However, Rogers (2009, p. 5) suggested that libraries “need to change and adapt to the needs of customers”, and:

[...] need to stop performing tasks that are no longer needed and take on new tasks available through social media in order to promote, market, and transparently manage libraries in today’s society.

Additionally, librarians should understand the benefits of social media for public relations and marketing and study the use and of the Web 2.0 tools taking as an example their application by the private sector industries.

Kenneway (2007, p. 97) argued that use of technology and Web 2.0 applications are much discussed topics “within the professional marketing community”. However, “good marketing is the same as good librarianship. It is about adding value, communicating this, and building strong relationships with customers”. When considering using new technologies the librarian should first ask what they have to offer to the users and how these techniques can meet and support the marketing objectives, as “technology in marketing is a means to an end, not a goal in itself”. Additionally, Fichter (2007) argued that the difficulty with Web 2.0 marketing is not the lack of strategies itself, but rather deciding which strategies to apply first. On the other hand, Lasic-Lazic *et al.* (2009, p. 7), recognising the great potential of Web 2.0 tools offer to libraries, suggested the development of training programs for librarians because “only educated librarians who

are knowledgeable in the usage of social networking tools and services can promote these services to their users”.

#### 4. Conclusions, recommendations and further research

Librarians are trying to find appropriate ways to respond to the contemporary requirements, fulfill their goals, meet the needs of both existing and potential users, and communicate the library's value. It has become perfectly clear that for libraries to survive, the provision of services should meet the requirements of current trends, respecting the identified and changing demands of a more challenging user. This literature review has revealed that marketing, offers a wide range of activities and tools that may assist librarians in dealing with a wide variety of issues in the current socio-economic context concerning their role, image and utilization. However, many of them hesitate to adopt marketing methods. The “selling” concept is still a taboo to many librarians, even though libraries, more now than ever, need to attract users and maximize the use of library services.

It is most important that librarians should receive the appropriate training in order to abandon existing misconceptions. Library staff must realize that by understanding the marketing process, its theory and applications not only they will support library services, but will take into practice marketing activities (such as use of Web 2.0 to promote activities and library's mission, build a library brand name, advertise effectively services and events), that will change the image and the direction of the library as a user-centered organisation. The only way of achieving this is by engaging staff in training and continuous education in marketing and relative issues and activities. Strategic marketing planning is a coordinated management process, that libraries should embrace and incorporated it in their managerial tasks. Numerous professional organisations offer a wide range of training toolkits to support their efforts suggesting ideas and providing successful implementations examples. Librarians that hesitate to employ traditional marketing models and techniques can choose the alternative and differentiated approaches of relationship and word of mouth marketing. Thus, the use of technology, Web 2.0 and social networks open a new way of communicating with users. Social networks and Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook, YouTube, blogs and Wikis get the attention of young users, provide an opportunity for libraries to revamp services and move towards the library 2.0 concept, and engage users in participating in the library scene.

This literature review tackles a number of issues concerning marketing and library services. However, further research is needed on a number of issues concerning library staff, services and marketing issues. For example, the literature review showed that Web 2.0 and social media are having an impact on library services and libraries are using these tools as a mean of marketing services. It is worth investigating the way in which libraries are using these tools, how they implement them, methodologies that are using, how libraries convey library messages through social media and case studies on specific social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Furthermore, further research is needed on a number of specific library marketing issues such as the awareness of marketing concepts by library staff and the ways in which libraries train their staff in order to put into practice marketing, the implementation of 7Ps in libraries, the usefulness of social networks in the library marketing process and case studies of country approaches on marketing applications in libraries.

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