

Parallel Sessions D
D4 – Perspectives on New Skills and Roles

Saturday, September 21, Room E, 9.30

Managing Interpersonal Relations: Information Professionals and Communication in the Digital Age

Comba, V

Comba, Valentina: University of Torino, Central Medical Library, Corso A.M.Dogliotti 14, Torino 10126, Italy, valentina.comba@unito.it

Digital libraries are a fact: users are increasingly turning to distant sources and communication as a quick, efficient way to retrieve information and to deal with colleagues and staff. This paper aims to explain principles of human communication, using the main research by G.Bateson, P. Watzlawick and other anthropologists and to discuss how such research was implemented. Research also applies the interpersonal relations between medical librarians and users and colleagues, both in a face-to-face and distant communication. The following issues will be highlighted: which is the role of the Information Professional in a digital context? Is it true that intermediation has become useless? Are the digital libraries too easy to use, even providing “affective” support, and consequently has the human help become redundant? How can we make remote services (i.e. digital reference) effective? Recent research and practical evidence answers some of the above questions. Recent literature discusses these issues in a renewed frame of relations. Reference is also made to counselling psychology which apply to the patient-physician relation. In conclusion, the new professional skills and roles are presented through some practical examples.