

From the Conventional to the Virtual Library: The Role of the Activities Connected to the Users's Education

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Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Regioni Lazio e Toscana (n.d.t.: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale of the Latium and Tuscany Regions, i.e. IZSLT) is a veterinary Public Board operating in the following areas: animal health; animal origin food and foodstuff hygiene, breeding and animal production hygiene.

IZSLT is structured by a central site located in Rome and eight local departments located in the Latium and Tuscany Regions. The staff employed amounts to about 270 people.

The scientific research activities actually represent one of the vital functions of IZSLT. The central library is in the headquarters in Rome, indeed, it is connected to the single small libraries located in each department.

Since 1998 up to now, the central library has acquired a number of electronic resources, the aim being, from one hand, to foster and improve the possibilities of the scientific updating of the researchers operating for the Institute and, on the other hand, to enable the local Departments to access information directly on one's desktop, at one's fingertip. As a matter of fact, the staff operating in the local Department hardly attend the Library because of the distance, obviously.

The above-mentioned electronic resources now available in the Library are the following ones: the international bibliographic databases (such as ASFA, CABI, Analytical Abstracts, Science Direct) and several electronic journals.

Various plans concerning the training activities targeted for the library users are being under study, some are under way, some others have been already carried out for the staff permanent education to master electronic information resources, by using: theoretical and application courses; reference activity accomplished training and following up the users in the library and over the phone; meetings to inform on new electronic products and services pertaining each peculiar area of interest; manuals explained and disseminated to describe the way to access electronic information.

The training activities carried out have showed good results in increasing the personnel's capability to use and manage the electronic resources available. As a consequence, it is noteworthy that the researchers are currently enabled to update on their specific area of activity in a timesaving and cost-effective way, thus remarkably improving the research activities of IZSLT.