

# Medical library website – an instrument of global education

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### Introduction

The library website's architecture is very important in global education. The library Web manager is responsible for the quality of information to all potential users and should be aware of this responsibility, constructing online educational tools.

The aim of the study was to verify the presence of educational content relating to information literacy on the library website. We also hoped to find out whether these elements / contents make the characteristic feature of designing the medical libraries' websites.

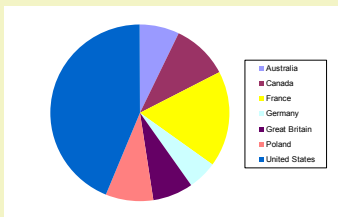


Fig. 1. Viewed medical library websites

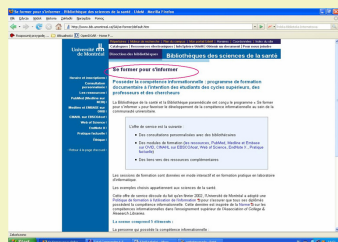


Fig. 2. Montreal University Library (Canada) – Universal distance education resources

### Methods

During the first half of the present year, the authors visited the websites of 137 medical libraries from Australia, Europe and North America (Fig. 1).

The studied group consisted of 109 academic libraries: university, medical departments, college and other medical schools; 17 libraries of hospitals and medical centers and 12 other: central libraries, medical associations, research institutes.

The websites were chosen from the European Integration Committee and Iowa University - Medical Libraries on the Web.

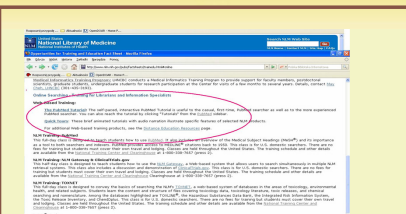


Fig. 3. National Library of Medicine USA – Distance education resources for librarians

### Results

(Fig. 4) Educational contents found: • Search manuals (handouts) • Web guides • Tutorials • Training sessions • Video-instructions • e-learning topics • Tip sheets • FAQ's.

All these materials are offered:

- to meet different information needs of library users,
- walk them through the process of conducting a search
- make the research easier and most effective,
- help to prepare a paper or a reference list.

22 of examined medical libraries offer only information about educational panels (teaching programs, schedules, registration forms, contact to the librarian), so they do not treat the website as a platform of online education.

24 of the websites do not show any educational contents related to developing information literacy.

3 of the websites are not available for public.

The best example of the proper instrument of global education is the USA National Library of Medicine website (Fig. 3). Links to PubMed Tutorials of NLM can be found on many medical Web pages from different countries. Moreover, the pieces of information are dedicated to different groups of users (Fig. 7) (the public, health care professionals, researchers, librarians and publishers).

A considerable educational content is available on American medical libraries websites, especially: Public Health Library, Berkeley, University of California; University of Texas - Medical Branch (Galveston) Library.

Large collection of educational materials referring to information literacy may be found also on Canadian university libraries Web pages (Ottawa, Saskatchewan Fig. 6); special self-teaching blocks for librarians are offered by libraries: University of Montreal (Fig.2) and University of Nantes.

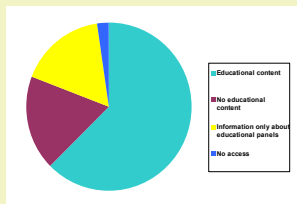


Fig. 4. Educational content on medical library websites

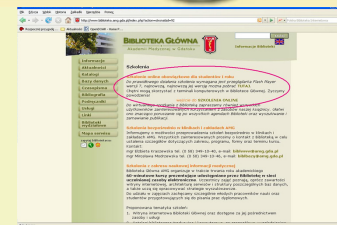


Fig. 5. Gdańsk Medical University Library (Poland) – Distance education resources for students

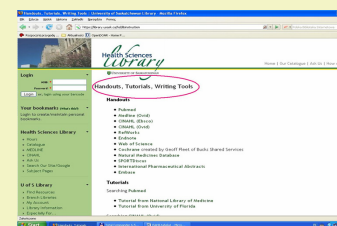


Fig. 6. Health Sciences Library (Saskatchewan Univ. (Canada) – Distance education resources for information users

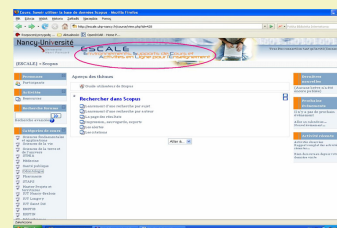


Fig. 7. Nancy University Library (France) – Distance education resources for different user groups

### Conclusions

The results of the study acknowledge the preliminary assumption that a standard medical library website contains / should contain educational materials - elements, that would be helpful for the wide range of users, e.g.: librarians, researchers, teachers, students, health care staff, patients and family members.

Universal, worldwide availability of Web information, including (medical) library services, creates new opportunities of not only local but global education and collaboration as well.

The library users may either take advantage of searching manuals prepared by their own library or share the ones localized on different continents. For a librarian, the possibility of learning different concepts of information management and various educational models from hundreds of libraries may stimulate own development towards creating and implementing educational tools.