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**Satellite Meeting: Agile Methodology in Libraries  
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## **Agile Methodology in the Promotive Activities of the “Svetozar Marković” University Library**

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper is focused on the agile methodology in a digital library environment. Text before you refers to the promotive activity of the “Svetozar Marković” University Library in Belgrade. The author of this paper has a documents convergence in mind. That convergence is desirable for the promotive activities in each university library. This paper is a case study. At the same time it is a descriptive study. Its goal is to explain promotive activities realized by the University Library mentioned here, but through their usual phases – beginning with a proposal until the end. Those promotive activities for whose realization agile methodology was being used in Library are taken into account. In certain empirical framework, those persons who use agile methodology are librarians with long professional experience. Their usual characteristic is that they have strong information skills. Except that, they have abilities for efficient individual and team work. Furthermore they are oriented towards low-cost solutions. New technological environment is close to them. The agile methodologies do not exclude the implementation of some traditional means. Combined operations give often a very successful result.*

*A librarian who performs promotive activities, doesn't neglect in practice his current set of obligations and tasks. He tries to connect them with those events that arrive. The Library regularly looks for and finds such events in order to stay in contact with users and achieve their loyalty. It tends to receive new readers. During this post-covid period the relationship towards library audience is more open. Library users receive new information and widen their own knowledge reading catalogues of exhibitions. It is in such a way that users are being reminded of some important facts from the world of science and receive new knowledge as well as professional recommendations for reading through bibliographies which are included into the exhibitions catalogues. Such very popular literature always finds readers easily.*

*This descriptive study shows how librarian can make educational influence to actual and potential users and tends to make them understand better the type of the library. It is a way to widen also the*

*membership of the library through attracting those readers who need the library such as it is – with its' technical equipment, strategy, collections and the opportunity to use sources in Serbian and in foreign languages. Making library reality closer to users will help them get acquainted better with its' staff and collections. Services and the collections are more accessible if there are monographies published in a printed form or on CD-s. The University Library has some hybrid editions of catalogues which improve the image of this institution in public.*

*What makes the behaviour of a librarian truly agile is his entire effort to make certain creator, his life and his work closer to users. Except that, the way of presenting news in the library includes introductory texts, posters, computer presentations, and diverse sources of information. We live in the epoch of information-communication technologies. So, informatics with standards for librarians is being implemented in cataloguing and classifying the catalogues of exhibitions. These are the standards which are being implemented for cataloguing all other monographies including doctoral dissertations, master theses and conference books from professional or scientific meetings. A catalogue which is classified this way confirms to readers who were present or absent that an event was organized. That publication including indispensable reviews will inform him wider on the event he had maybe neglected. Agile methodology including oral and written presentation gives synergetic result which contributes to a more successful work in the domain of promotive activities. It is a way to stimulate the interest of readers for Library work and development.*

**Keywords:** agile methodology, promotive activities, new technologies, university library, users.

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## **1. Introduction**

Agile methodology is very elastic for the needs of adjustments to the requirements from the environment it is being implemented in. It makes the work of librarians more penetrable in the realization of promotive activities. So, those materials that Library uses for informing readers on news, on the range of its services and collections are to be visible enough. Although visibility is important, a change on web site cannot be always carried out. If the quantity of work doesn't allow it or if there is any other problem concerning library staff, there are other, traditional solutions which can be used in order to inform readers such as: posters, radio, television, etc. An optimum combination of such means is an indispensable precondition of successful work in the realization of the promotive activities of all academic librarians.

According to Cambridge Dictionary the adjective *agile* in business English means: to deal with new situations or changes quickly and successfully. So, most agile corporations have flexible management systems that can quickly accommodate global change and exploit opportunities. It is according to the same Dictionary that noun *methodology* means: system of ways of doing, teaching, or studying something<sup>1</sup>.

## **2. Practice in the “Svetozar Marković” University Library in Belgrade**

The University Library regularly helps schools of higher education by instructing users to find and retrieve e-information resources. Except that, library makes users' horizons wider through making book closer to its' readers. Scientific thought is getting more and more developed through the organization and realization of the promotive activities in the Library.

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Dictionary. Business English  
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/> (Accessed: 20 June 2023)

It can be alleged that promotion is one of the instruments of marketing-mix in the library-information activity<sup>2</sup>.

The Library follows the news in social and technical development since it was open for users in 1926. One of the best ways to get familiar with its' readers is to invite them to the opening of an exhibition of library materials in Belgrade. The opening of an exhibition is not the same as a discussion or a workshop. However it is a way to gather readers and get focused on the work of an author selected by an academic librarian who had consulted previously his colleagues. One of the basic characteristics of such events is a pluridisciplinarity. Students of basic as well as students of postgraduate studies follow scientific anniversaries, come to the exhibitions, analyse library units published in different languages and in diverse formats, think, meditate on the events which were going on hundred or two hundred years ago. After the opening they think of such events in another way. New technologies make the realization of each exhibition in the University Library possible and successful even if it is a low-cost event<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, this Library is in a way the leading one among the libraries of similar type in the academic community of Serbia.

During the planning of an event as the exhibition of library materials, an academic librarian has the role of an iniciator. It is with a written material for the catalogue of the exhibition that he is to ask a professional opinion from a reviewer. It is usually an expert present in that domain, interested in such a topic, ready to meditate about it and give finally his favourable opinion. Supposing that the material for the catalogue of the Library exhibition is accepted by the reviewer or even reviewers, an academic librarian has to get addressed to a higher level within the Library in order to receive its' consentment. The opinion of reviewers is being respected and accepted in the practice of The "Svetozar Marković" University Library in Belgrade. Reviewer is usually somebody who works as a university professor.

Director of the Library gives a general guideline which will help the academic librarian to find feet in making selection among possible topics for preparing an exhibition of library materials. The interactivity among the employed is important on all the levels of hierarchy in making decisions about the preparation and the realization of each library exhibition. It is also indispensable to organize correctly an event which has to present a university library to the public, not just an author, not just a person choosed by the academic librarian who is obliged to prepare the exhibition. Professional suggestions of colleagues are always welcome and can be of big importance for the author of an exhibition.

### **2.1.Preparing the exhibition of library materials**

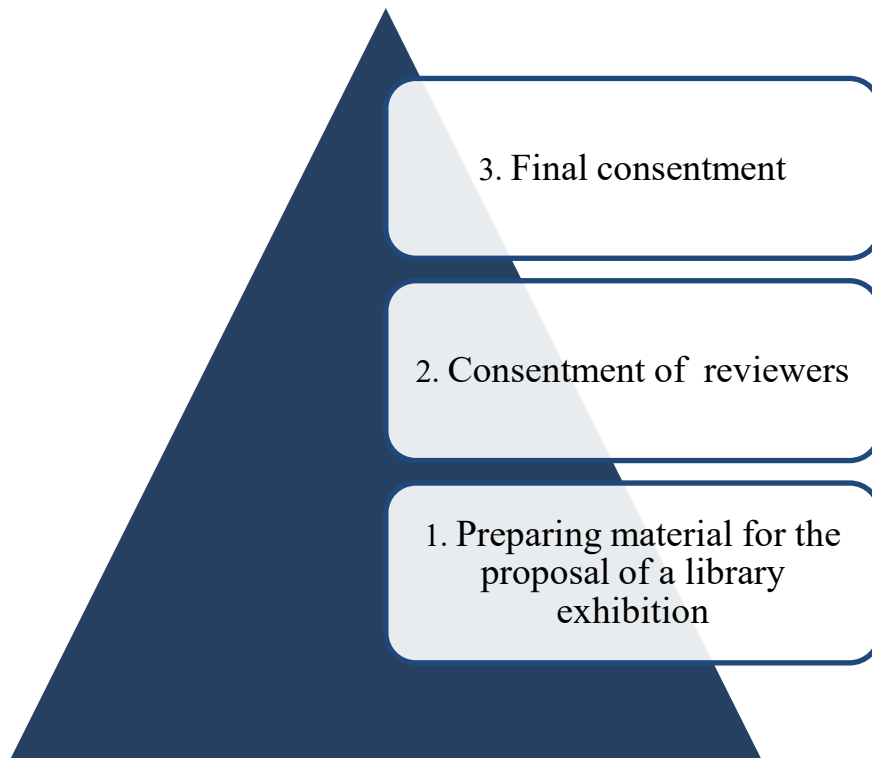
It is in order to prepare the exhibition that information e-resources are to be retrieved first. It implies that e-catalogues of the Library have to be retrieved as well as its' traditional catalogues depending on the topic of that exhibition. As each exhibition is an event which should be argued and well documented, it would be desirable to prepare not only books and journals but also:

- photos,
- boards and
- posters.

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<sup>2</sup> Vesna Župan, Marketing u bibliotekama, Beograd, Svet knjige, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> The "Svetozar Marković" University Library in Belgrade  
www.unilib.rs (Accessed 12 May 2023)



Picture 1. Phases in decision-making about the topic of an exhibition in the “Svetozar Marković” University Library in Belgrade

Photos are unavoidable elements of a topic exhibition. Except the fact that it is to be crystally clear, each photo should have an adequate place among exhibition units. Boards are posters of a big format. Format B1 is being used often. Dimension doesn't mean much if font is not determined carefully. Preparing a poster, an academic librarian should always have in mind a target group e.g. those the exhibition is devoted to. Poster is to be particularly clear and illustrated. It needn't be any big format if it is made only to pass the information on the opening of the exhibition. All those documents which are connected to the exhibition are to be downloaded in pdf or any other format which would make their implementation easier.

The collaboration between a library and a printing house is unavoidable. Therefore it is desirable to choose a printing house which:

- has an adequate range of products and services,
- respects deadlines regularly,
- works in a professional way,
- has the list of prices which are in accordance with the financial situation of the library.

So, its' prices are to be bearable enough. Libraries in big cities have such an advantage that they may contact more printing houses in order to compare their offers. The location can be an influential factor in decision-making on the choice of a printing house but upon an insight into the quality of its' products and services. It isn't unusual that a small printing house which works good doesn't have its' own web page. However it needn't be crucial for the collaboration with the University Library. A working task performed correctly and in time would be the best recommendation for a printing house to continue its' collaboration with the University Library “Svetozar Marković” in Belgrade.

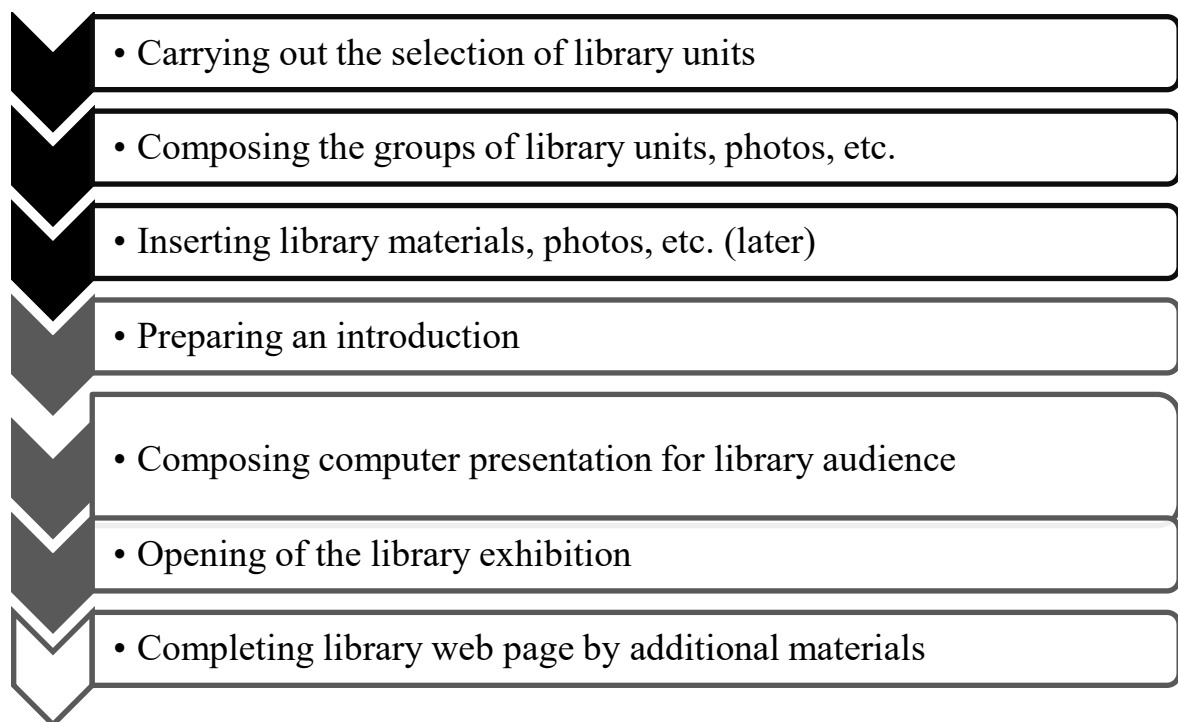
## 2.2. The realization of the exhibition of library materials

There are certain phases in the realization of library exhibition. They are illustrated by the picture no. 2. The selection of library units is to be done first. After that, their grouping is to be done according to thematic similarity. Photos are to be grouped after that. Finally, all other objects are to be grouped for the exhibition. These objects will be exposed later in the exhibition space.

It is useful to know the length of library shelves and their capacity because of the planning of the exhibition. Every experienced academic librarian usually knows at least approximately the number of monographies he may deposit onto the shelves. This makes the realization of the exhibition easier. Exhibits are to be deposited upon the end of a previous exhibition respecting the plan of exhibitions within the Library.

Introductory text which describes the topic of the exhibition, its' inducement and key motive is being put on the web page of the University Library. Computer presentation is being composed for the public whenever it is possible. It is the work of the author of the exhibition. It may contain animations but it is not compulsory.

There were no possibilities to gather the audience during COVID period. The exhibitions of library materials were going on in a real space. A computer presentation was a way of an on-line opening. In the post-covid period the situation is normalized. So the audience could have arrived to the opening in the University Library whenever it was predicted to be on-site. Digital camera follows such openings in order to leave a documentary record on a library web page predicted for that.



Picture 2. The realization of an exhibition of library materials in the “Svetozar Marković” University Library in Belgrade

Fields with small black arrows on the picture no. 2 show which activities have to go on within the Library. So, it is the selection of library units, the grouping of library units, photos and other objects, and the inserting of library units which may go on even later. Library units for an exhibition can be also borrowed from another library. It didn't happen once in the professional practice of the "Svetozar Marković" University Library. Gray small arrows refer to those activities which are addressed to the public on-site and on-line. The only white small arrow refers to those activities which go on upon the opening of the exhibition.

After the completion of content on the library web page by adding a link through which the audience can see how the opening of the exhibition went on, a much higher number of persons has the insight into that event in comparison with the number of persons who were, actually, present at the opening. In practice there is no single-model of the opening of an exhibition at all. It is that difference between the opening of an exhibition *on-site* and the one which is *on-line* which deserves our attention. Only those persons who could have come were physically present at the opening of the exhibition. Contents in free access are one of key characteristics of enlightenment nowadays. Except the possibility to see the contents several times, users may download them for further use and send them by e-mail. That's how knowledge is being spread among the users. The progressive population is only the nation ready to learn and absorb new inventions and discoveries. It is due to the agile methodologies that a better result can be achieved in the macro-environment of each library.

The number of persons who arrive at the opening of an exhibition in the "Svetozar Marković" University Library is much lower in comparison with the total number of library members. The goal of the organizer of the opening of an exhibition has never been to gather several thousand people under the roof of the Library. There are no real conditions for that. Halls do not have so many seats.

The "Svetozar Marković" University Library has always been open for collaboration. If mobile phones would be used for informing the users on future events, many readers would come to the promotion of the exhibition catalogue. As this Library has several thousand members, it wouldn't be practical. A crowd would be caused. Except that, catalogues are not being published in many printed copies but they exist also on CD-s.

I would mention that the Library is a place where silence is very desirable. The sounds of mobile phones would disturb readers. That's why the site of the Library and posters as well are being used in public relations. It is realistic to have in mind the capacity of a hall when guests are to be invited. Therefore agile methodologies in the University Library in Belgrade are to be implemented also through the convergence of documents. It means that there is an inflow of contents which refer to the opening of the exhibition. It is visible on the web page of the Library.

### **3. The examples from the practice of the "Svetozar Marković" University Library**

I will mention several examples from the practice of the "Svetozar Marković" University Library in Belgrade. Its' users are mostly students, researchers, and university staff. There are also people who retired among regular members. Pupils of the last grade of secondary schools also come in order to retrieve library collections, compose a final paper and get ready for university studies. The youngest as well as the most experienced users are interested in new scientific events in the Library. Since the beginning of COVID period, several hybrid editions of the exhibition catalogues are published. As the budget of the Library is very

limited, an academic librarian tends to find an optimum solution. He downloads the catalogue of the exhibition on CDs or he makes it published in a printed form. The number of copies is not high.

I would mention some of the catalogues by the author of this text e. g. me. They are published in Serbian: “*Andrew Carnegie in the Core of Social Transformation: 100 years Since the Death of the Philantrop of Libraries*”, “*Agatha Christie in the E-environment of Serbian Academic Librarianship*”, “*Radmila Stojanović: 100 Years Since the Birth of a Great Economist*”, “*OECD in the E-environment of Serbian Academic Librarianship*”, “*David Ricardo: 250 Years Since the Birth of a Great Economist*”, “*The Renewal of the American Economy in the Age of Franklin Roosevelt*”, and “*Joseph Schumpeter in the E-environment of Serbian Academic Librarianship*”.

All these catalogues are hybrid editions. The majority of them is published after the beginning of COVID period. The exhibitions were prepared in the real space of the Library. Opening was going on sometimes *on-site*, sometimes *on-line* as in the case of the exhibition on Agatha Christie, about OECD, David Ricardo etc. So, these openings were on-line.

Agile methodologies accept the possibility of changes in the planning and the realization of projects. If we go in for exhibitions seriously, we may imply that each exhibition is one project. That project includes the set of tasks which should be realized. The possibility to choose between *on-site* and *on-line* opening exists because of the fact that there are potential changes in the environment.

Besides, as the Library has to respect certain financial limits, it tends to decrease expenditures in the domain of publishing monographies. As expenditures arrive one after another, it can be expected to notice once that financial problem is to be solved. It is in order to meet users' expectations and respect the limits of the Library budget that this institution has to combine sometimes CD edition with a printed one. Management is to be flexible and agile methodology contributes to that. So, these are not only authors who take care of expenditures but also the Library itself.

#### **4. Positive influences from the international environment**

One of the books which made strong influence on the author of this text e.g. me is published under the title *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* by The National Library in Madrid (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid)<sup>4</sup>. This publication which includes professional papers as well as the catalogue of the exhibition which is also very professional, was a real intellectual support to an important event. This monography which contains several hundred pages is a clear sign that those library units which were exhibited do not mean much if a library user and a visitor didn't understand deeper the reason for organising that exhibition, the background of that event as well as historical circumstances the *Alexandria Library* existed and worked in.

With very reach or even poor information technologies, a monography is the most important contribution to an event such as an exhibition in the library-information activity. If that work was published on CD, it would have found its' readers undoubtedly. However international relations are not always so simple to understand particularly because of copyrights which are

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<sup>4</sup> *Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Homenaje a la memoria, apuesta por el futuro*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 2003.

to be respected. Except that, authors and editors have a right to take care of the circulation of their monography.

What does it have to do with the agile methodology? That example reminds us on what really is in the core of a cultural event. That is a written word. If a written word is not prepared well enough, it will mean that there is no ambition to spread written culture. In such a case all mobile phones and computers of different types are in vain. Only a book which is professionally written can be the base for the organization of an event and the implementation of certain methodology. Metaphorically speaking, each book is the consequence of its' authors' tendencies to stay recognized in infinity.

## 5. Situation on the Portal of European E-theses DART

As far as materials on agile methodology are concerned, it can be noticed upon the retrieval of the Portal of European E-theses DART (*Digital Access to Research Theses*) that they are not numerous at all<sup>5</sup>. In fact, there is an obvious lack of them. Generally speaking, having in mind all possible domains, doctoral dissertations which are successfully defended in Serbia find their place on this Portal. Since the beginning of this year doctoral theses successfully defended at the University of Belgrade are not visible in such a way. These Belgrade theses are in free access due to the Digital Repository of The University of Belgrade PHAIDRA (*Permanent Hosting, Archiving and Indexing of Digital Resources and Assets*) but they are not available through DART.<sup>6</sup> They can be found by retrieving the e-catalogue of the University Library in Belgrade. As far as DART is concerned, Serbian doctoral theses successfully defended at the University of Novi Sad<sup>7</sup>, at the University of Niš<sup>8</sup>, and at the University of Kragujevac<sup>9</sup> are visible on this Portal.

The author of this paper carried out a retrieval of the Portal of European E-theses DART on 28 June 2023 with the intention to examine the presence of the materials about agile methodology in libraries. Only eight records are found. It is out of these eight that four refer to theses successfully defended in Spain, two are successfully defended in France, one in Czech Republic, and one in Italy. Trunking is also to be mentioned in the case of such retrievals. It is of great importance in the retrievals for scientific purposes although it may sound neglectable in the first moment. An asterix as a sign within the brackets (\*) is to be put after the root of each key word in inquiry in order to receive the highest possible score.

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<sup>5</sup> DART-Europe E-theses Portal

<https://www.dart-europe.org/basic-search.php> (Accessed 12 June 2023)

<sup>6</sup> E-teze: doktorske disertacije Univerziteta u Beogradu

<https://eteze.bg.ac.rs/> (Accessed: 9 June 2023)

<sup>7</sup> University of Novi Sad

<https://www.uns.ac.rs/index.php/en/> (Accessed: 15 June 2023)

<sup>8</sup> E-teze: doktorske disertacije Univerziteta u Nišu

<https://eteze.ni.ac.rs/> (Accessed: 11 June 2023)

<sup>9</sup> E-teze: doktorske disertacije Univerziteta u Kragujevcu

<https://eteze.kg.ac.rs/> (Accessed: 10 June 2023)



## 6. Conclusion

As many previous generations of students were not taking exams during any lockdown, the idea was to help the actual students and professors. Agile methodologies are being used in the promotive activities of the « Svetozar Marković » University Library in Belgrade with the goal to include as many readers as possible into the events organized by this institution. Real opportunities stimulated the University Library since the beginning of COVID period to use this methodology for the realization of the exhibitions of its' own materials. This refers to the exhibitions of library units in different scientific domains.

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