

# Transparent universities with transparent libraries

Ana R. Pacios

*Received:*  
August 28, 2014.  
*Accepted:*  
February 24, 2015.

## ABSTRACT

This paper proposes transparency indicators for university libraries, while identifying areas of information relevant to the diverse public stakeholders, in view of good practices identified in libraries and other organizations in this field. In order to determine the degree of transparency of these libraries belonging to the *Madroño* consortium of Madrid, the existence of these indicators in their respective websites is assessed. A comparison of the degree of transparency of selected libraries to that of their respective universities reveals that some libraries could implement significant improvements, chiefly in the areas of visibility and currency of the information they offer, while also

\* Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, España. areyes@bib.uc3m.es

incorporating relevant contents for their diverse interest groups.

**Keywords:** Transparency; Accountability; Spanish University Libraries; Indicators; Madroño Consortium.

## RESUMEN

### **Universidades transparentes con bibliotecas transparentes**

*Ana R. Pacios*

Se presenta una propuesta de indicadores ligados a la transparencia en las bibliotecas universitarias, identificando áreas informativas relevantes para los diversos colectivos o público interesado que tiene alguna relación con ellas (stakeholders). Se han tenido en cuenta las buenas prácticas identificadas en bibliotecas y otras organizaciones en esta materia. A continuación se analiza y valora la presencia de estos indicadores en la página web de las bibliotecas pertenecientes al consorcio madrileño Madroño para conocer su grado de transparencia. La comparativa entre el nivel de transparencia de algunas bibliotecas con el de sus respectivas universidades permite ver cierta relación entre ambas. Los resultados del análisis muestran que algunas bibliotecas pueden realizar mejoras significativas, fundamentalmente, en cuanto a visibilidad, actualidad de la información que ofrecen y, también, incorporando algunos contenidos relevantes para sus diferentes grupos de interés.

Palabras clave: transparencia; rendición de cuentas; bibliotecas universitarias españolas; indicadores; consorcio Madroño.

## INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis, transparency and accountability in organizations and the free access to information have moved to the forefront of public discourse, becoming an ascendant idea in

organization culture.<sup>1</sup> Some institutions are making considerable efforts to promote transparency and accountability. An example of this in the international level is Transparency International; and in Spain we find the Compromiso y Transparencia foundation, the Luis Vives Foundation and Lealtad Foundation. Moreover, the recent Transparency Act passed in Spain<sup>2</sup>, entering into force in December 2014, though spurring controversy and criticism because of its limited scope; nonetheless attempts to guarantee the public's right of access to public information. The act requires those entities within its purview, including public university, to publish information regarding its operations, the applicable standards for these operations and organizational structure, and the instruments of planning and evaluation and degree to which these are met. In *Chapter II* of this Act, addressing active publicity, public administrators are required periodically to publish up to date relevant information in order to ensure the transparency of their activities. Specifically, Article 5 of the Act require the release of institutional, organizational and planning information, while information associated with finances, budgets and statistics is required under *Article 7*.

*Transparency* is a term that comprises accountability, trust and credibility, and its scope of applicability lies in evaluation, while also associated with ideas such as corporate social responsibility. The clarity of information and free access to the same are aspects associated with all of these. Transparency expresses an organization's duty to release information regarding the administration and results, while providing rationale for its actions. Such organizations, moreover, are accountable before all persons with which they interact and associated stakeholders. Transparency is part of a democratic system and arises from the concept of the right to know how and for what public monies are spent.

When an organization is voluntarily accountable it promote trust and credibility. This has direct repercussions in its reputation and public face. But the simple fact of accountability should not be construed as an end in itself: its purpose is as a means of achieving trust between leaders and managers and other who actively in the accountability processes, including workers and beneficiaries of an organization's services or actions. Despite the need to provide accountability, as of yet there has been no determination of the ideal quantity and quality of information organizations should be required to supply.

1 J. Cabrera, "La transparencia es clave para el futuro de nuestras organizaciones".

2 Ministry of the Presidency, Transparency Access to Public Information and Good Government Act 19/2013 of December 9.

ICT and the Web 2.0 constitute a powerful tool in the communication of transparency and sharing of information. Moreover, these advance allow for interactive communication. The webpage assumes the existence of corporate identification of the organization of any and everyone who is associated with it and it also serve as a means of publicity. In this way it can become the main channel for providing accountability with regard to what it does things, how it does them and the results achieved.

In the area of non-profit organizations devoted to providing services to society using public money, these organizations are required to employ any revenue they generate to fulfill their stated missions. In this way transparency and accountability are assumed broadly. This is the view expressed in the report on transparency in non-profit organization released by the Observatorio del Tercer Sector (the Third Sector Observatory) (OTS), which sees transparency and accountability as inherent to their mission and values. The accountability of non-profit organizations entails financial and legal matter with regard to compliance, stating: “being accountable to society of the impact or its actions and activities and how these help improve society, including its commitment to its mission, i.e., why they perform some activities and not others.”<sup>3</sup>

Several studies on transparency in certain Spanish institutions pretend to contribute to increasing the degree of transparency, identifying the relevant areas of information to be released to the public. The Compromiso y Transparencia foundation examined the degree of transparency in 50 universities in 2011 and 2012. The latter study included an examination of 25 private universities.<sup>4</sup> These studies rank the universities in term of transparency in accord with specific criteria. The reports of these studies provide recommendations to the university administrations about the institution information disseminated through their web pages, while also discussing the relevant contents of such information from the standpoint of accountability. Since university libraries are basic university services, to which “at least 5.0% of the ordinary universities budgets are allocated,”<sup>5</sup> it would not be unreasonable to suggest they should be more transparent. Moreover, such

3 Observatorio del Tercer Sector, *Transparencia y rendición de cuentas en las organizaciones no lucrativas*, 13

4 E. Barrio y J. Martín Cavanna, *Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia en la web de las Universidades Públicas Españolas*, y *Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia en la web de las Universidades Públicas Españolas 2012*

5 Red Española de Bibliotecas Universitarias, *Normas y directrices para bibliotecas universitarias y científicas*, 62-63.

transparency could be useful to solidifying and enhancing the university's good reputation. On the basis of this idea, this study aims to address the following the questions:

- What information should the university library make transparent?
- Do university libraries use their websites to provide transparency?
- Is there a relationship between the philosophy of transparency of the university and one of their basic services such as its library?

### TRANSPARENCY OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The evaluation of Spanish university libraries is in large degree a well-established operation, as evidenced in the professional literature and the number of libraries that have received professional library quality services awards on the basis of evaluations they undergo.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, in 1994 the Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas (REBIUN) (Spanish University Libraries Network) agreed to gather data associated with their activities. This that time one can consult predefined and custom statistical data and annual indicators. This allows anyone to consult and evaluate diverse aspect with the library's performance, effectiveness, quality and impact. This commitment is, in principle, an exercise linked to transparency of the Spanish university libraries.

The literature on transparency and accountability is associated with that on evaluation, in that both arise from a single process. Accountability and evaluation are needed for quality to be recognized and funding to be justified.<sup>7</sup> The antecedents, stages and progress in the field of evaluation of libraries have been sequenced by Heath, with an emphasis on the support that the American College and Research Libraries (ACRL) have been lending to all manner of activities associated with this topic.<sup>8</sup> With regard to management and administration, the Standards for Higher Learning Libraries states: "The library communicates assessment results to library stakeholders."<sup>9</sup> This statement alludes directly to the idea of accountability to anyone having anything to do with them. Even with evaluation and accountability, dissemination is

6 Nuria Balagué, "Consolidando la calidad en las bibliotecas universitarias: evaluaciones, sellos, diplomas y certificaciones".

7 J. M. Fluxá, "La rendición de cuentas y la evaluación son necesarias para que la calidad se reconozca y la financiación se justifique".

8 F. Heath, "Library assessment: the way we have grown".

9 American College and Research Libraries, Standards for Libraries in Higher Education.

sometimes lacking. It is not done at all or it is done only done in a cursory fashion. Moreover, just like in the business world, we have a lot of information data and indicators on libraries, but critical questions still need to be posed to envision a strategy and draw a trajectory for the future.

Library professionals have pointed to the need be accountable before the competition with other university services, and the information that it should provide: this is the case of St., Clair,<sup>10</sup> Osman and Bidin<sup>11</sup> and Smith.<sup>12</sup> Others have criticized the use made of all the data gathered by libraries when these only serve to demonstrate their value and provide accountability before the university administration, and are not designed and used to improve the organizational services and learning.<sup>13</sup>

In the Spain the topic of the transparency in libraries has drawn considerable interest for some time. In the 1990s Carmena proposed a decision making process for libraries based on memory-reports, and he set forth the guidelines to following for drafting them.<sup>14</sup> It has also been the focus of diverse events where documents such as “service letters” were presented in order to contribute, among other questions, to the administrative transparency of libraries.<sup>15</sup> As a result of the crisis, stress has been placed on the need for libraries to be accountable to the community regarding the best and most effective use of public their public budgets.<sup>16</sup>

Even though there is no legal normativity specifying the type of documents or information a library must exhibit, some regulation provide the duty to draft an annual service report or account.<sup>17</sup> This requirement supposes that the university library, responsible for the administration and exercise of a budget, must be accountable before the university with regard to how its budget is allocated, a habitual practice, on the other hand, among universities.

10 G. St. Clair, “Assessment in an Era of Accountability”.

11 Z. Osman y S. Hanon Bidin, “Accountability in library management: issues and strategies for the 21st. Century”.

12 Gregory A. Smith, *Retooling the Profession: Librarianship in an Era of Accountability and Competition*.

13 Meredith Farkas, “Accountability vs. Improvement: Seeking Balance in the Value of Academic Libraries Initiative”.

14 Miguel A. Carmena Escribano, “Tomar decisiones en una biblioteca: algunas sugerencias sobre las posibles pautas a seguir en la elaboración de memorias-informes”.

15 Julia García Maza, “Exigencia de transparencia vs. vocación de opacidad: función social de las cartas de servicios en las bibliotecas”.

16 Cristóbal Pasadas Ureña, “Multialfabetización, aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida y bibliotecas”.

17 Por ejemplo, el Reglamento del Servicio de Biblioteca de la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.

Third Strategic Plan, which includes an objective devoted to the coordination of the memoirs of actions, statistics and indicators as a model of transparency and tool for quality management.

### OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGIES

This paper has two objectives. The first aims to determine what information that should be exhibited by the library for the purpose of transparency, taking in to account the best transparency practices for libraries and other organizations. A proposal of the indicators linked to the relevant areas is presented, and examples of these indicators in several libraries are also examined. An indicator is a unit of information (document, datum or symbol) that shows or indicates the transparency goals of the area.

The second objective, applied to the proposal made, is to learn the degree of transparency of the university libraries belonging to the Madroño consortium by examining their webpages. To this end, the presence of established indicators is analyzed. This will serve also to see if it is possible to link the transparency shown on the university web and that of its library. This examination starts with the hypothesis that the philosophy and culture of transparency of the first must influence and be seconded by the latter.

This paper is modeled on the work of Barrio and Cavanna<sup>18</sup> on transparency in Spanish universities. Following the methodology used in their two paper son the subject, we first selected a group of libraries to study, and then we identified the most relevant areas for accountability in accord with the mission and function of the university library. We proceeded to select the contents or basic units of information (indicators) corresponding to each of the areas selected, taking into account several examples observed in university libraries. After establishing these indicators, we ascertained their presence in each of the web pages of the seven member university libraries of the Madroño consortium under study. This group was taken because they are public university libraries in Madrid of diverse sizes, with varied number of

18 E. Barrio y J. Martín Cavanna, Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia en la web de las Universidades Públicas Españolas y Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia en la web de las Universidades Públicas Españolas 2012.

users, distinct collections and different infrastructures, etc.<sup>19</sup> The search for indicators centered on the web pages since they are a major medium through which users access library resources and services and, more importantly, for accessing the type or information associated to the library administration.

In order to deem the information display on the library web pages as ideal, we took into account the four following criteria which are habitually used in the evaluation of web pages:<sup>20</sup>

- *Visibility*. The information is located in an easily visible place and the contents are recognizable. One does not have to take a long route to get there.
- *Accessibility*. Understood as the ability or ease with which one can get to the website, including factors that facilitate their use or availability. This is translated and used through any navigation device, while retaining clarity, search-ability and its interactive features.
- *Currency*. The information is up to date and verified through the date of actualization of documents. The required information must correspond to the year 2013 since this is the last year legally closed when this paper was written. Since the analysis was drafted in the May 2014 and the library memoirs corresponding to this year have not yet been published, we decided to take the year 2012 as current.
- *Language*. The information must be understandable to the person consulting. I must have, therefore, be written in Spanish or offer a translation option when it appear in a foreign language.

#### THE AREAS OF INFORMATION RELEVANT TO TRANSPARENCY OF THE LIBRARY

On the basis of the aforementioned study, we present the areas of information considered relevant with the indicators that a university library should provide on its web page in order to be transparent (*Table I*). And some representative examples of each one. This adaptation takes into account its peculiar nature, in view of the relevance for the stakeholders interested in this information: politicians, the university administrators and institutions or organizations that contribute to funding, beneficiaries of their services (real

19 After this paper was accepted for publication the library of Universidad Complutense de Madrid ceased being a member of the aforementioned consortium. This does not affect its inclusion in this study since at the time of this analysis it was a member in good standing.

20 Marina Jiménez Piano, "Evaluación de sedes web".

and potential users, professors and students, especially), their own workers, other libraries with which they work, suppliers or providers of resources and the general public.

Table I. Transparency indicators grouped by relevant informational areas

Informative Areas	Indicators
1. Purpose of service and objectives pursued	a) Definition of the mission b) Strategic plan
2. Government organs and operational rules	c) Members that make up the library commission d) Regulations e) Specific normativity of the operation of services f) Letter of duties and rights of users
3. Services offered	g) Letter of services
4. Information resources	h) Policy/collection management program i) Institutional open access policy
5. Personnel	j) Organogram k) Personnel directory
6. Results	l) Management indicators (balanced scorecard) m) Satisfaction surveys n) Annual service log of activities report o) Acknowledgements, awards and certifications
7. Financial information	p) Budget q) Public tenders and contracts
8. Memberships in networks and other collaborative relationships	r) Networks with which they work and cooperate

### *Purpose of library service and objectives pursued*

The purpose or *raison d'être* of the service is materialized in its mission statement defined when any strategic planning process is addressed, together with the vision and values. This should be revised and modified as warranted from time to time in order to adapt it to the particularities of the environment. In any case, it must be aligned with the objectives of the university and orient itself toward the strategic commitment.<sup>21</sup> This should be posted openly on the web page with the corresponding date of adoption and revisions, as, for example, it is in the library of the Massachusetts Technology Institute (MIT).<sup>22</sup>

Having a strategic plan demonstrates that the library is oriented toward objectives, which entails persons in a project and communicates this, what it wants to do and how it pretends to do it.

21 W. Lougee, "The diffuse library revisited: aligning the library as strategic asset", 614.

22 MIT Libraries, date consulted: May 12, 2014, <http://libraries.mit.edu/about/>

The indicators linked to this area of information would be two:

- a) Definition of the Mission
- b) Strategic Plan (current)

### *Organs of governance and operation rules*

This area seeks to learn about the organ in charge of developing lines of action of library policy, and its main operational rules. In Spanish universities, the library commission tends to be the collegial organ that participates in its planning and management. All of its officers (chairman, secretary, and representatives of teachers, admin workers, services workers and students should be duly identified by their participation in the decisions that affect the library. The examples of the Las Palmas<sup>23</sup> and Jaén<sup>24</sup> do this, the latter also allows access to the official minutes of meetings.

In terms of the rules that regulate the operation of the library, the fundamental provisions are expressed in the regulations gathering the provisions library personnel and users are required to observe. The specific complementary norms to the regulations are also considered insofar as these norms serve to regulate the operation of such services as lending, use of work rooms, and lending of laptops or tablets, etc.; documents available on the website that are often provided under a single link. Another document that is part of this area would be the letter of rights and duties of users, whose objective is that the user gain a clear and unequivocal understanding of their relationship with the library.

The indicators associated with this information parcel would be:

- c) Members that integrate the commission of the library (or corresponding collegial organ)
- d) Regulations
- e) Specific normativity of the operation of services
- f) Letter of duties and rights of the users

23 Organización, date consulted: May 12, 2014, [http://biblioteca.ulpgc.es/conocenos\\_organizacion#organos\\_gobierno](http://biblioteca.ulpgc.es/conocenos_organizacion#organos_gobierno)

24 Comisión de biblioteca, date consulted: May 12, 2014, <http://www10.ujaen.es/conocenos/servicios-unidades/biblio/sobreelservicio/comision>

### *Organs of governance and operation rules*

This area seeks to learn about the organ in charge of developing lines of action of library policy, and its main operational rules. In Spanish universities, the library commission tends to be the collegial organ that participates in its planning and management. All of its officers (chairman, secretary, and representatives of teachers, admin workers, services workers and students should be duly identified by their participation in the decisions that affect the library. The examples of the Las Palmas<sup>25</sup> and Jaén<sup>26</sup> do this, the latter also allows access to the official minutes of meetings.

In terms of the rules that regulate the operation of the library, the fundamental provisions are expressed in the regulations gathering the provisions library personnel and users are required to observe. The specific complementary norms to the regulations are also considered insofar as these norms serve to regulate the operation of such services as lending, use of work rooms, and lending of laptops or tablets, etc.; documents available on the website that are often provided under a single link. Another document that is part of this area would be the letter of rights and duties of users, whose objective is that the user gain a clear and unequivocal understanding of their relationship with the library.

### *Range of services offered*

If one speaks of transparency, in addition to showing the list of services offered to users, the library should: “inform about concomitant rights and duties associated with such services,” as established in Royal Decree 951/2005 issued by the Ministry of Public Administration of Spain, which establishes the general framework for improving the general Administration of the State. In this sense, the most complete informative document and indicator linked to this information on the range of services provided, and which reinforces the principles of transparency before stakeholders, is

- g) The letter of services

25 Organización, date consulted: May 12, 2014, [http://biblioteca.ulpgc.es/conocenos\\_organizacion#organos\\_gobierno](http://biblioteca.ulpgc.es/conocenos_organizacion#organos_gobierno)

26 Comisión de biblioteca, date consulted: May 12, 2014, <http://www10.ujaen.es/conocenos/servicios-unidades/biblio/sobreelservicio/comision>

Best practices in the field of quality evaluation of Spanish university libraries show that many have a letter of services. In this way they exhibit the range of services provided, the quality commitments they acquire with regard to these services and the systems or mechanisms users can use to communicate with the library (complaints and suggestions, for example), in addition to the unit of measurement or indicators that serve to verify the degree of compliance with these commitments.

### *Information recourses*

The library collection is an indispensable resource sustaining most library services, while also the largest area in which the annual budget is spent. The development of collections must be transparent, and the policies guiding collection development must be made public.<sup>27</sup> The tool or indicator that help guide the proper collection development and management, and serves to inform proper budget allocation on the basis of genuine priorities and objective of the linked to the collection, the user and institution is:

#### h) The collection management policy or program

It serves to communicate to the user the priorities and policies in all matters associated with the collection. Among other things, it shows the procedures associated with acquisition of material and its integration in a coherent collection, as well as its control and maintenance, including weeding and purging as warranted.<sup>28</sup> With regard to content, proposals are still being made to adapt it to the new current procedures.<sup>29</sup> As an indicator linked to transparency, it should include a section in which provides the formula chosen to be used by the library in order to allocate the budget among its departments, faculties and other organizational units of the university as per its structure, and the criteria established that are applicable.

Since the university is one of the main producers of knowledge as a result of its research activities, it would have to demonstrate its commitment

27 Ministerio de Cultura, Pautas para establecer una política de colecciones en una biblioteca pública.

28 Aurora de Mesa Sánchez y Margarita Taladriz Más, "El concepto de colección y el programa para su gestión y desarrollo".

29 Holly Hibner, **Making a collection count: a holistic approach to library collection management**, 20-35.

by providing dissemination and open access to this knowledge in the form of an institutional policy. But is the library that manages the lion's share of the materials produced by university research through the institutional repositories, while performing those tasks associated with archiving and dissemination. For this reason, another indicator of transparency in this area would be:

- i) The institutional open access policy regarding research results

### *Personnel*

The capacity to contact the personnel providing services in the public administration is a trait of proximity with the citizenry that without a doubt contributes to better relations between both parties. Like other institutions, many libraries reveal their organizational structure, the relationship and dependencies between the units and the functions of personnel, in addition to facilitating the contact. To this end, they make a series of tools available to users. These tools can serve as indicators of transparency in this section:

- j) Organogram
- k) Directory of personnel

A good example of an organogram is that used by the library of Ohio. This organogram is a vertical type and includes complementary information and relationships among the dependencies it shows, in addition to various pages associated with its structure.<sup>30</sup> With regard to the directory, the library of Harvard University offers the possibility to search by thematic areas, library, librarian name, language and faculties or school,<sup>31</sup> in addition to showing the complete information of each library. Another useful model for presenting their specialist librarians is offered by MIT under the link "Ask the expert."<sup>32</sup>

### *Results*

To refer to results assumes alluding to evaluation and performance. Every once and in a while new modifications and new alternatives arise, in addition

30 Organizational Chart Ohio Library, date consulted: May 12, 2014, <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/49249554/The-Ohio-State-University-Libraries-Organizational-Chart>; University Libraries Committee Structure, date consulted: May 12, 2014, <http://library.osu.edu/about/osul-committees/university-libraries-committee-structure/>

31 Staff Library, date consulted: May 16, 2014, <http://lib.harvard.edu/staff-directory>

32 Ask the Expert, date consulted: May 16, 2014, <http://libraries.mit.edu>

to proposals insofar as methods and techniques for measuring the results of libraries.<sup>33</sup> The International Standard Organisation (ISO), has tried over the course of three editions to promote the use of performance indicators and normalize the gathering of information needed for calculation of these indicators.<sup>34</sup>

Spanish university libraries have established the statistical data and annual indicators that they gather to evaluate their performance and available on the REBIUN webpage.<sup>35</sup> This paper aims to verify whether the use of some of these indicators for its management control, given that this tool has been linked of diverse occasions with transparency in public administration.<sup>36</sup> By means of this periodic report, which prioritizes the synthesis and the relevance without attempting to be exhaustive, one can track the objectives that should align with the organizational strategies,<sup>37</sup> whether in its French group (Tableau de Bord) or American version (Balanced Scorecard). Associations such as the ACRL<sup>38</sup> have promoted its use and there are libraries that have used it for many years.<sup>39</sup> In Spain, la Pompeu Fabra has posted it on its webpage since the late 1990s;<sup>40</sup> also Carlos III, which adopted it in 2003 for the control and tracking of its service management.<sup>41</sup>

In view of the diverse information associated with the results of a library, the indicators linked to the same have centered on three aspects:

- l) Balanced scorecard
- m) Results of the user satisfaction surveys
- n) The yearly annual memory or activity report

33 P. Brophy, Measuring library performance: principles and techniques.

34 Véase el trabajo Nuevos instrumentos para la evaluación de bibliotecas: la normativa internacional ISO sobre la tercera y última ISO 11620:2014, coordinado por Marta de la Mano González.

35 Indicadores REBIUN, date consulted: May 16, 2014, [http://estadisticas.rebiun.org/cuestionarios/indicadores/indicadores\\_main.asp#](http://estadisticas.rebiun.org/cuestionarios/indicadores/indicadores_main.asp#)

36 Por ejemplo, Carlos Vivas Urrieta, El Cuadro de Mando Integral en el sector público local: el caso del Ayuntamiento de San Cugat del Vallés.

37 José Bisbe y Viñas, "Criterios y herramientas para el control de la gestión a entidades no lucrativas", 148.

38 American College and Research Libraries, Library Assessment Conference: Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment.

39 Balanced Scorecard, date consulted: May 20, 2014, <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/bsc/metrics/index.html>

40 Indicadors, date consulted: May 20, 2014, <http://www.upf.edu/bibtic/es/coneixer/indicadors/>

41 Teresa Malo de Molina, "El Cuadro de Mando Integral, una herramienta para visualizar la estrategia en la biblioteca" 56. [The Balanced scorecard, a tool for visualizing library strategy].

Like other organizations, libraries habitually draft an annual memoir in which they report the activities performed during the year in terms of a balance. If it is complete, it can contain information associated with all aspect regarding performance: statistics on the use of services; indicators, user satisfaction survey results; degree of compliance with strategic plan objectives; cooperation projects; annual used figures; service hours; installations, etc., without forgetting financial information derived from the library's approved and exercised budget, showing itemized revenue, outlays, investments and allocation of resources. All of this information is structured and presented in accord with diverse criteria in accord with the library in question.

In the area linked to results, one must also keep in mind the information linked to qualitative aspects that show "how libraries do things." As such, indicators that evidence the quality of services, processes and activities would be:

- o) Acknowledgments, awards and/or certifications received

### *Financial information*

This information is the most closely associated with accountability. This is why there is a strong economic connotation that is fundamentally linked with:

- p) The budget administered and the data regarding how it is exercised

Those in charge of libraries, such as public collection managers, exhibit professionalism by at year's end reporting and justifying the financial management performed during the year, including by information associated with the budget assigned and exercised, and itemizing revenue and outlays. Even though it is common for this to be included in annual reports, there are notable differences in terms of the degree of detail provided, for example, information regarding personnel. Since, this is often an expense not exercised by the library, except for salaries paid to student interns (included in Chapter IV), many libraries do not offer information regarding this matter. As such, one must examine other sources to find such information, such as, the university memoir of the REBIUN of data and indicators. Libraries such as Rioja<sup>42</sup> and Las Palmas<sup>43</sup> do report it.

42 Memoria de la biblioteca 2013, date consulted: May 20, 2014, <http://biblioteca.unirioja.es/documentos/burmen13.pdf>

43 Memoria informe 2012, date consulted: May 20, 2014, [https://biblioteca.ulpgc.es/files/repositorio\\_de\\_docum152/memorias/bu/memoria\\_2012.pdf](https://biblioteca.ulpgc.es/files/repositorio_de_docum152/memorias/bu/memoria_2012.pdf)

If the library has alternate sources of funding, other than the university allocation, it would behoove it to report the name of the contributing companies or institutions, the financial backing and public funding secured and the amounts. The library of Yale University is an example of this.<sup>44</sup>

Other indicators of transparency associated with this area linked to financial information would be:

q) Procurement and public tenders

In Spain, all public organizations and institutions are required to issue public tenders and publicize the contracts with suppliers that surpass a certain value pursuant to the basic legislation governing public procurement. Libraries also have to issue public tenders for the subscriptions to journals and other publications, regardless of support, and of contracts it enters into for information access to specialized data bases and other electronic resources when these surpass a value of € 200.000,00. Generally, universities have a webpage where the public can consult the “supplier profile.”<sup>45</sup> This webpage also publishes contracts awarded, including contracts awarded by the university library, and other data and information associated with contracts pursuant to the Public Sector Contract Act. The Transparency Act also addresses this aspect under Article 8, 1a, and specifies that this information shall be released and shall include the terms of the contract, the value of the contract, the participating bidders and the identity of the company awarded the contract.

The library of the Universidad de Barcelona, for example, posts its contracts and public tenders on its web page, including contracts with information suppliers. This page also shows public tender invitations, objectives, deadlines and awards.<sup>46</sup> The British Library provides a good example of transparency, using an institutional webpage to post detailed information of payments to suppliers above £ 25.000. This data is updated on a monthly basis.<sup>47</sup>

44 Yale University Library. Annual Report 2012-13, date consulted: May 20, 2014, [http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=yul\\_annual-reports#page=2](http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=yul_annual-reports#page=2)

45 Perfil del contratante, date consulted: May 20, 2014, [http://www.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/perfil\\_contratante](http://www.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/perfil_contratante)

46 Licitacions i concursos, date consulted: May 14, 2014, <http://crai.ub.edu/ca/coneix-el-crai/crai-unitats/unitat-administracio/licitacions-concursos>

47 Transparency: Financial Transactions over £25,000, May 14, 2014, <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/foi/transparency/transactionsover25k/transactionsindex.html>

*Membership in networks and other collaborative relationships*

Working in a network and being a member of second level organization implies transparency and accountability before the other members. What is more, these memberships entail costs and membership fees in order to have the right to enjoy the benefits they offer. As such, another indicator of transparency would be to release and report about:

- r) The networks with which the library works and cooperates

It is also a common practice in Spanish university library webpages to post the logos of the networks in which they work and cooperate, and the other institutions with which they have collaborative agreements. These post often include information regarding activities, objectives and services, etc.

#### TRANSPARENCY IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES OF THE MADROÑO CONSORTIUM THROUGH ITS WEBPAGE

The information linked to transparency in libraries belonging to the Madroño consortium is available largely under links with diverse labels, such as About Us; Normativity and documents; Organization and Management; The Library; Get to Know Us; Learn More. A link on the main page titled Transparency was found that addresses this intention.

On the basis of information areas established in 18 indicators associated with the same, the analysis of seven libraries reveals the situation that appears in *Table II*, whose most outstanding features are discussed below:

- The values obtained in each library swing on a scale from 7 to 13 points (with 18 total point possible), which shows significant differences between them. The most transparent are the library of Alcalá, Carlos III and UNED, the latter with the same points.
- The indicators common to all libraries are the normativity on library use, the personnel directory and the mission, despite the fact that the latter is less visible because it is often located in the second or third

levels of other documents. Moreover, the mission also frequently appears without the date of adoption and modification. In some cases, the mission does statement does not fulfill the technical requirements for such statements.

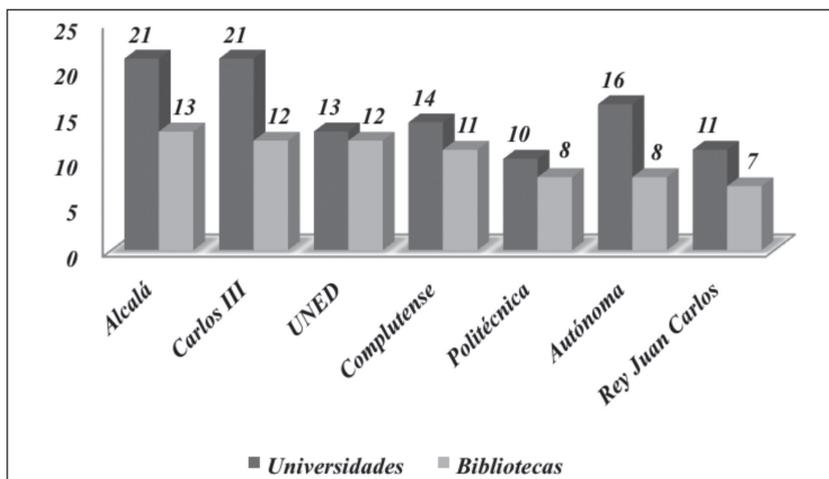
- The indicators missing from the sample are those contained in the Balanced Scorecard and the public procurement contracts and tenders. Even though the use of management indicators is common to all of these, in no case are they linked to a pilot tool in the entire library based on the “synthesis” as required by the Balanced Scorecard. In the case of the Carlos III University, which has used it for this purpose,<sup>48</sup> the one corresponding to the year of analysis is not there.
- There are indicators present in a small number of libraries: the members of the Library Commission only in Alcalá and with access to official acts; the Policy of Program for collection management (Carlos III and Complutense) and the Letter of User Rights and Duties (Carlos III and UNED); and the Institutional Open Access Policy, the current Strategic Plans, the Organogram (vertical only in the UNED and Alcalá, the latter the most complete in that it includes names and levels, and the results of satisfaction survey in three libraries.

Table II. Transparency on the web of university libraries members of Madroño consortium (May 2014)

Informative Areas	Indicators	Libraries of Madroño consortium						
		Alcalá	Carlos III	UNED	Complutense	Politécnica	Autónoma	Rey Juan Carlos
Purpose and objectives	Mission	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
	Strategic Plan	✓ (2012-14)*	✓ (2011-14)*	✓ (2012-15)*				
Organs and operational rules	Members of Library Commission	✓*						
	Letter of user rights and duties		✓*	✓				
	Library regulations	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Normativity governing use of services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Range of services	Services letter	✓	✓	✓*		✓		
	Information resources		✓*		✓*			
Personnel	Institutional open access policy	✓*			✓*	✓*		
	Organogram	✓*		✓*	✓			
Results	Personnel Directory	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Annual memoir	✓	✓	✓ (2012-13)*	✓		✓ (parcial)	✓ (parcial)
	Balanced Scorecard							
	Satisfaction surveys				✓*	✓*	✓* (2013)	
	Awards, acknowledgments, certificates	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Financial information	Total budget	✓*	✓	✓	✓*	✓		
	Competitive bid contracts							
Membership in networks and collaborative relationships	Networks with which they work or cooperate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total	13	12	12	11	8	8	7

## CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN TRANSPARENCY OF UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LIBRARIES

In the latest transparency ranking of Spanish universities serving as the objects of this study, those belonging to the Madroño consortium have a score assigned as a function of the number of the 25 indicators defined herein appearing on their respective university webpages. All of the universities fall within a range of 3 to 24. The universities based in Madrid fall in a range of 11 to 21, as can be seen in the columns in *Figure 1*. In order to determine if there is a parallel between transparency of universities and their respective libraries, taking into account 18 indicators established herein for the latter, a value of 1 is also assigned if the indicators appear on its webpage. Thus we obtain the values shown in columns on the right in *Figure 1*, falling in an interval of 7 to 13. In order to use the ranking of universities to establish comparisons, the library transparency values have not been weighted. If a given causal factor is weights (for example, when there are certain indicators in at least three libraries, which is the case of the Collection Administration Policy, the Strategic policy or the Institutional Open Access Policy, the situation of the first three places would be reinforced.



*Figure 1.* Comparative ranking of university-library transparency

A comparison of the values and the ranking of universities to their respective libraries reveals the following:

- The two university libraries (Alcalá and Carlos III) topping the transparency ranking are based in Madrid.
- In the remainder of the sample under study, there appears to be a certain affinity between universities and their respective libraries, though in one case there is a clear split. The university in second place in the ranking (Autónoma) does not correspond to the place held by the library. But the library in last place belongs to one of the lowest ranked universities. One can safely assert that the culture of transparency of the university is reflected in its library, though in one case this was not entirely true.

## CONCLUSIONS

The presence of the established transparency indicators on the webpages of this group of Madrid-based libraries allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- All of these libraries publish information that justifies their administration and organization; however, there are relevant differences between these with regard to visibility, updating, and release of finished contents. All of the libraries under study have room for improvement in this area.
- The dispersion of documents associated to established indicators in many links and levels does not facilitate visibility in several cases; in other cases, the size of the font is too small and contrast is low, which in conjunction to the saturation of contents has negative repercussions on accessibility.
- Currency of information is also lacking in some cases, especially with regard to strategic plans that were enacted without genuine follow through to the present, as well as with regard to annual memoirs or reports which often lag behind.
- The contents most frequently appearing have to do with normativity governing the use of services, and the information associated with their placement and contact with professional working there.
- The areas requiring improvement have to do with information resources. Both the collection policy or program and matters of open access are infrequently represented in the sample.
- The indicators linked to results should be improved in some libraries. The budget should be reliable, understandable and provided in detailed. It is important to know the total cost of a service that is included under the heading of outlays for personnel.

- Even though some exhibit useful section because they summarize in an orderly way the most significant data of the library (budget, visitors, users, collections, etc.), several require further explanation. The statistical data or indicators are not always understandable. In this sense, the annual memoir or report contributes to clarifying in a convenient way all of the data adding value to the figures.
- A key point to be stressed is the budget devoted to information resources, highly detailed and differentiated by type: monographs, journals, electronic resources (the latter sometimes by hiring modality), etc.
- Even though university libraries have agreed to a set of indicators which allow comparisons (available in REBIUN), this does not relieve the need of each of library to have and exhibit the group of relevant indicators linked to their respective strategies. In this sense, in addition to aiding administrative control, the use of the Balanced Scorecard, allows one to see the key areas of results of the library.
- One can infer the existence of a relationship between the culture of transparency of the university and the library, if one takes into account the correspondence between highly ranked universities and highly ranked libraries.

## REFERENCES

- ACRL (American College and Research Libraries). *Library Assessment Conference: Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment*, Baltimore, Maryland, October 25-27, 2010. Fecha de consulta: 12 de enero de 2014, <http://libraryassessment.org/archive/2010.shtml>
- Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*, 2011. Fecha de consulta: 13 de febrero de 2014, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>
- Balagué, Nuria. “Consolidando la calidad en las bibliotecas universitarias: evaluaciones, sellos, diplomas y certificaciones”, *El Profesional de la Información* 16 (4) (2007): 338-342.
- Barrio, E. y J. Martin Cavanna. *Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia en la web de las Universidades Públicas Españolas*, Madrid: Fundación Compromiso y Transparencia, 2012. Fecha de consulta: 10 de enero de 2014, <http://www.compromisoempresarial.com/wp-content/uploads/Universidades2012.pdf>

- y J. Martín Cavanna. *Examen de transparencia. Informe de transparencia en la web de las Universidades Públicas Españolas 2012*, Madrid: Fundación Compromiso y Transparencia, 2013. Fecha de consulta: 10 de enero de 2014, <http://www.compromisoytransparencia.com/upload/32/56/InformeUniversidad2012.pdf>
- Bisbe y Viñas, J. (1993), “Criterios y herramientas para el control de la gestión a entidades no lucrativas”, *Bibliotecas y servicios culturales en el ámbito municipal* (Alcúdia, 18-20 de noviembre de 1992), 133-154. Alcúdia (Mallorca): Fundació Biblioteca d’Alcúdia.
- Brophy, P. *Measuring library performance: principles and techniques*, London: Facet, 2006.
- Cabrera, J. “La transparencia es clave para el futuro de nuestras organizaciones”, *Innovación en la gestión*, 2008. Fecha de consulta: 10 de enero de 2014, <http://blog.cabreramc.com/2008/10/09/la-transparencia-es-clave-para-el-futuro-de-nuestras-organizaciones/>
- Carmena Escribano, Miguel A. “Tomar decisiones en una biblioteca: algunas sugerencias sobre las posibles pautas a seguir en la elaboración de memorias-informes”, *Boletín de la Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios* 33 (1993): 25-40.
- Farkas, Meredith “Accountability vs. Improvement: Seeking Balance in the Value of Academic Libraries Initiative”, *OLA Quarterly, Measuring Success* 19 (1) (2013): 4-7.
- Fluxá, J. M. “La rendición de cuentas y la evaluación son necesarias para que la calidad se reconozca y la financiación se justifique”, *La cuestión universitaria. Boletín electrónico de la cátedra UNESCO de gestión y política universitaria* 3 (2007). Fecha de consulta: 19 de enero de 2014, [http://www.lacuestionuniversitaria.upm.es/web/grafica/videos/j\\_fluxa.pdf](http://www.lacuestionuniversitaria.upm.es/web/grafica/videos/j_fluxa.pdf)
- García Maza, Julia. “Exigencia de transparencia vs. vocación de opacidad: función social de las cartas de servicios en las bibliotecas”, 109-118, en *Actas 8 Jornadas españolas de documentación*, FESABID, 2003.
- Heath, F. “Library assessment: the way we have grown”, en *Library Quarterly* 81 (1) (2011): 7-25.
- Hibner, Holly. *Making a collection count: a holistic approach to library collection management*. Oxford: Chandos, 2010.
- Jiménez Piano, Marina. “Evaluación de sedes web”, *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* 24 (4) (2001): 405-432. Fecha de consulta: 11 de enero de 2014, <http://redc.revistas.csic.es/index.php/redc/article/view/69/130>
- Lougee, W. “The diffuse library revisited: aligning the library as strategic asset”, *Library Hi Tech* 27 (4) (2009): 610-623.

- Malo de Molina, Teresa. "El Cuadro de Mando Integral, una herramienta para visualizar la estrategia en la biblioteca", *XII Jornadas Españolas de Documentación FESABID'13* (24-25 de mayo de 2013), 2013. Fecha de consulta: 23 de febrero de 2014, <http://fesabid.org/documentos/fesabid13-actas.pdf>
- Mano González, Marta. de la (coord.), *Nuevos instrumentos para la evaluación de bibliotecas: la normativa internacional ISO*, Madrid: aenor, 2014.
- Mesa Sánchez, Aurora de y Margarita Taladriz Más. "El concepto de colección y el programa para su gestión y desarrollo", *De libros y bibliotecas. Homenaje a Rocío Caracuel*, 233-241. Sevilla: Universidad, 1995.
- Ministerio de la Presidencia. *Ley 19/2013 de 9 de diciembre, de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información Pública y Buen Gobierno* (BOE, 10 de diciembre de 2013), 2013. Fecha de consulta: 11 de enero de 2014, <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2013/12/10/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-12887.pdf>
- Ministerio de Cultura. *Pautas para establecer una política de colecciones en una biblioteca pública*, 2009. Fecha de consulta: 22 de enero de 2014, [http://www.mcu.es/bibliotecas/docs/MC/ConsejoCb/GruposTrabajo/GT\\_Seleccion\\_BP/09\\_Pautas\\_para\\_establecer\\_una\\_politica\\_de\\_colecciones\\_en\\_una\\_biblioteca\\_publica.pdf](http://www.mcu.es/bibliotecas/docs/MC/ConsejoCb/GruposTrabajo/GT_Seleccion_BP/09_Pautas_para_establecer_una_politica_de_colecciones_en_una_biblioteca_publica.pdf)
- OTS (Observatorio del Tercer Sector). *Transparencia y rendición de cuentas en las organizaciones no lucrativas*, Barcelona: OTS, 2007. Fecha de consulta: 23 de enero de 2014, [http://www.lasociedadcivil.org/docs/ciberteca/200710\\_transparencia\\_ots\\_v44\\_copy.pdf](http://www.lasociedadcivil.org/docs/ciberteca/200710_transparencia_ots_v44_copy.pdf)
- Osman, Z. y S. Hanon Bidin. "Accountability in library management: issues and strategies for the 21 st. Century", en *Internacional Seminar Challenges of Libraries in the 21 st. Century* (29-31 March. Manila, Philippines), 2004. Fecha de consulta: 13 de enero de 2004, <http://asiapacific-odl2.oum.edu.my/C33/F219.pdf>
- Pasadas Ureña, Cristóbal. "Multialfabetización, aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida y bibliotecas", *Boletín de la Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios*, 98-99 (2010): 11-38.
- REBIUN (Red Española de Bibliotecas Universitarias). *Normas y directrices para bibliotecas universitarias y científicas*, Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1999. Fecha de consulta: 23 de enero de 2014, [http://bib.us.es/sobre\\_la\\_biblioteca/carta\\_servicios/normativa/common/bibliotecas\\_universitarias\\_rebiun.pdf](http://bib.us.es/sobre_la_biblioteca/carta_servicios/normativa/common/bibliotecas_universitarias_rebiun.pdf)
- Smith, Gregory A. *Retooling the Profession: Librarianship in an Era of Accountability and Competition*, Faculty Publications and Presentations, Paper 47, 2009. Fecha de consulta: 14 de febrero de 2014, [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib\\_fac\\_pubs/47](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs/47)

St. Clair, G. "Assessment in an Era of Accountability", *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 24 (3) (1998): 197-198.

UAB (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona). *Reglamento del Servicio de Biblioteca*, 2003. Fecha de consulta: 24 de enero de 2014, <http://www.uab.cat/servlet/Satellite/bibliotecas/normativas/reglamento-del-servicio-de-bibliotecas-1096482171114.html>

Vivas Urrieta, Carlos. *El Cuadro de Mando Integral en el sector público local: el caso del Ayuntamiento de San Cugat del Vallés*, Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, 26 de junio de 2007. Fecha de consulta: 28 de junio de 2014, <http://www.sfo.santcugat.cat/files/3-159454-annex/Doc02.pdf>

*Para citar este artículo:*

Pacios, Ana R. 2016. "Universidades transparentes con bibliotecas transparentes." *Investigación Bibliotecológica: Archivonomía, Bibliotecología e Información* 70: 103-127. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ibbai.2016.10.006>