

## New Information Space as a Factor of Development of Modern Society

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**Abstract:** the article identifies key factors, influencing formation of image of modern library in consumer's consciousness and analyzes the preferable choices in the market of information services. Quality marketing research was made by focus-groups method as exemplified by the Library named after A. Gorky (Perm). The research covered 5 different targeted audiences: schoolchildren, students, entrepreneurs, teachers and young scientists. The article gives behaviour characteristics of modern library services' consumers; the author tried to formulate recommendations on implementation of informative technologies intended to develop Russian libraries.

**Key words:** Modern society • New information space • Automation of processes • Modern library's image in consumers' mind • Quality research by method of focus-groups

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### INTRODUCTION

Development of modern society is based on formation of new information space. Single whole information space is intended for effective interaction of participants, access to informative resources of different levels, development of modern educational technologies and growth of information culture of citizens. Effective functioning of modern information society can be achieved through complex (all-round) use of modern technical means of information processing and the methods of organization of technological processes of problem solution [1].

Modern library is first of all an information center: on the one hand it offers access to its book fund, on the other hand enables the visitor to form dialogue with informative resources which can be located beyond its physical boundaries (data bases, digitized documents collections, web-sites and web-portals [2].

Libraries are no more "building with dusty windows and shelves and annoying old ladies using card-files" - today this image is slowly but totally all over the territory of the country is substituted for modern hubs with Wi-Fi and RF tags in the books, computers with free access to Internet and digitalized rare editions. But we must confess that interest in reading in Russia is really decreasing:

according to data from federal sociological researches more than 20% of Russians do not read books [3]. Therefore library must develop new relationship with its consumers with due regard to this new information paradigm [4].

Attracting visitors to libraries is a task which demands all-round approach. It is insufficient to hold more mass events, to equip and furnish the rooms in a better way, to buy new books and audio-visual materials: non-informed and not interested employees also can hinder development [5]. Significance of inter-production factors as well as inner design of the room, automation of working place at libraries becomes more evident when a library transfers from simple automat to disperse books to the public life center which is oriented to a personality and its changing needs [6].

In order to identify the key factors influencing formation of library image in consumer's mind quality marketing research was made by focus-groups method as exemplified by the Library named after A. Gorky (Perm). The tasks of research were as follows: to identify which library services are needed by population and investigate library image formed with different groups of population [7]. Research included carrying out of focus-groups survey for 5 different targeted audience: the respondents totally included 52 persons: men and women aged 14-33.

The first focus-group was formed by senior-grade schoolchildren and students of the first courses of the 5 different educational institutions of the city; focus-group "Students" included representatives of 5 Perm institutes of higher education (full-time and distance form of education). It is worth noting that small portion of respondents had foreign libraries visiting experience. Focus-group "Teachers" was formed by high and higher school teachers of the city. Focus-group "Small business" was characterized by diversified character: a portion of them was entrepreneurs who continued their education. All representatives of entrepreneurial community who participated in the research were working at service sphere (internet-shop, logistics, sales of oil and gas equipment etc). Focus-group "Young scientists" included Master's studies graduates and post-graduates of Perm's institutes. Therefore these focus-groups include all categories of targeted audience of modern library, which allowed to obtain information about preferences of potential consumers in regard to information services provided within the city, with purpose to increase visit rate and loyalty of city population to the library.

In the course of research respondents one by one were offered a number of questions in regard to the services offered by Gorky Library. Besides that for each targeted audience unique questions were added which allowed to find out non-occupied niche in information services market [8]. The results of focus-groups series "Consumers' behaviour of Perm's inhabitants in

information services market" are given below. Advantages and disadvantages of the Library are clear from respondents' answers. Positive features - volume of book fund which includes foreign literature and periodic literature; availability of different kinds of events held in the library, polite personnel. But the number of negative responses about existing services in all focus-groups dominated greatly over the positive features – and this leads us to conclusion about distinctly-formed image of the library in a modern consumer's mind. Negative responses were distributed in the following way.

Target group "Students" pointed out to such key factors as absence of cafe, Wi-Fi, non-modern appearance of the library, slow work of librarians, old-fashioned equipment, non-modern design inside and outside. Others factors which influenced the choice of the library are presented in Figure 1.

Student target audience pointed out to the following key factors: Wi-Fi, availability of specialized information in English and the service "Book taken home" (for example, a series of popular editions, which are demanded by this category of persons, that can be taken home after 1 year of visiting library). The factors which were acknowledged as the most unsatisfactory are as follows: difficult search (a new-comer suffers extreme difficulties in search for necessary books; non-convenient catalogue, much time spent for waiting and formalizing of request for literature); uncomfortable furniture and non-equipped rooms (Figure 2).

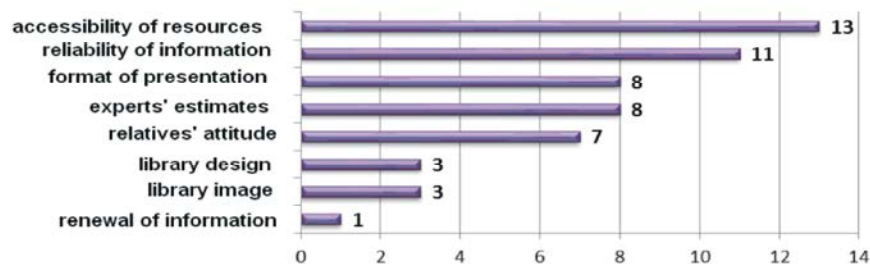


Fig. 1: Results of focus-group "Students": criteria influencing the choice of the library, points

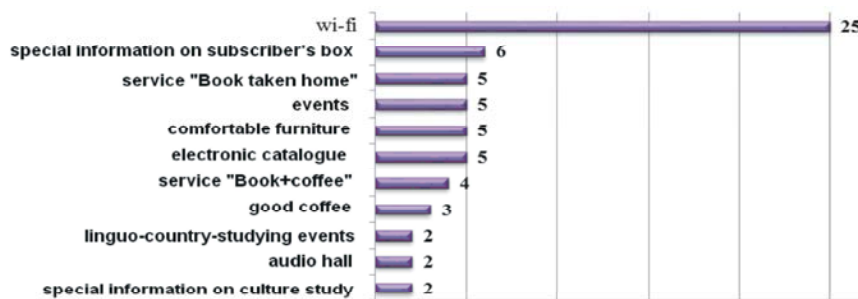


Fig. 2: Results of focus-group "Students": criteria influencing the choice of library, points.

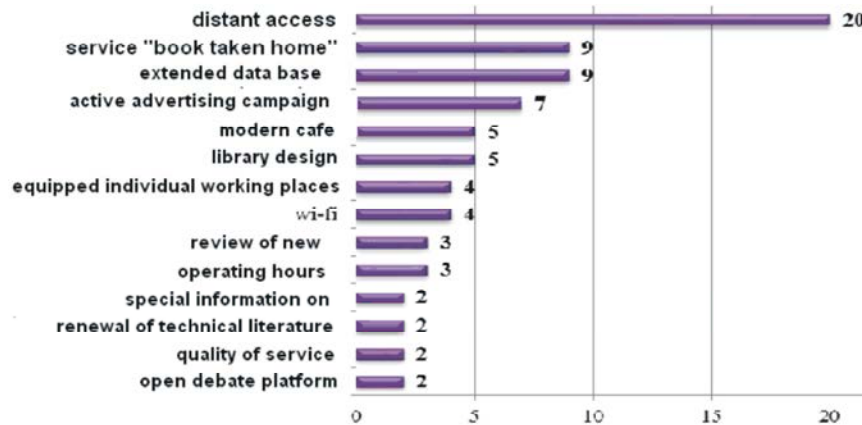


Fig. 3: Results of focus-group "Teachers": criteria influencing library choice, points.

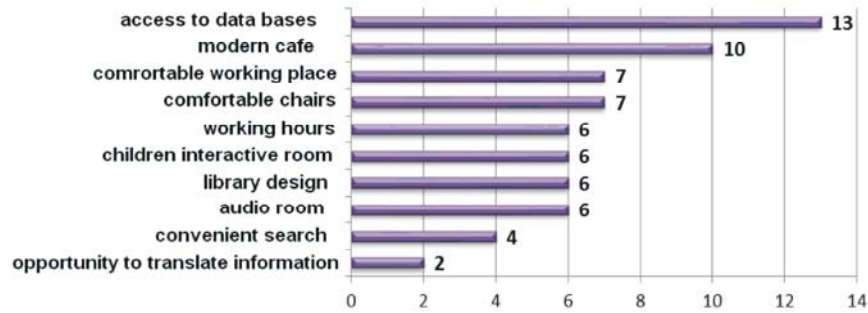


Fig. 4: Results of focus-group "Small business": criteria influencing library choice, points.

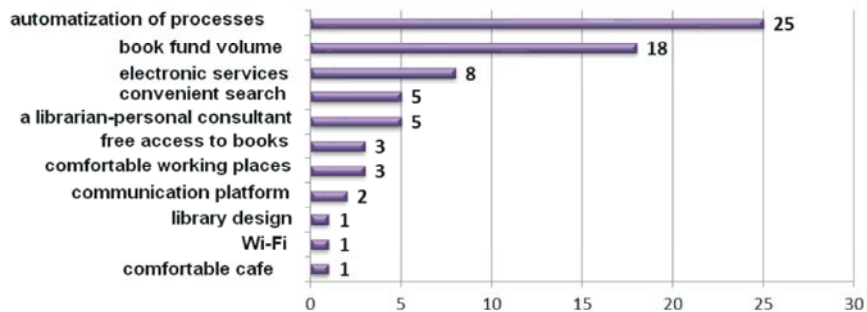


Fig. 5: Results of focus-group "Young scientists": criteria influencing library choice, points.

"Teachers" pointed out to inconvenient working hours of the library; absence of events for students; barriers while registering-in, non-equipped rooms and inconvenient card-files are usually significant obstacles for visiting library. The key criteria of library choice is distant access (opportunity to work with closed bases of electronic resources after getting log-in and password from the library), opportunity to take books home, extension of data base (Figure 3).

Respondents from business-community (Small-business froup) prioritized the factors as follows: unsatisfactory operating hours; impossibility to take bags into the room, difficult search; old-fashioned

furniture; availability of cafe. The condition of Library's success in opinion of entrepreneurs is access to data base (GOSTs, TC etc); modern cafe, comfort working place (Figure 4).

Respondents from focus-group "Young scientists" consider negative factors to be library's working hours, rare renewal of book fund; unsuitable process of providing visitors with books; design of building's design; impossibility to bring-in one's own books. It is worth mentioning that young scientists are more interested in infrastructure components (automation of processes, convenient search) - everything that will result in saving time (Figure 5).

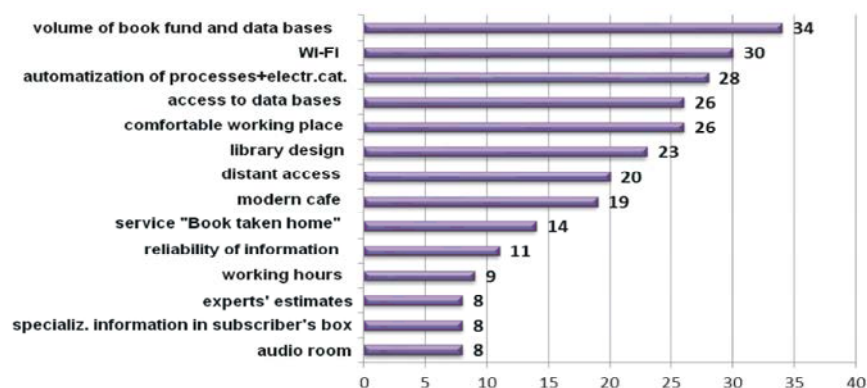


Fig. 6: Summarized results of 5 focus-groups: criteria influencing library choice, points.

Summarizing mentioned above negative features of Gorky Library emphasized by 5 target groups it is necessary to pay attention to the following key positions: increase in book-fund volume and extension of access to electronic resources; free of charge Wi-Fi; automation of processes and creation of "friendly" electronic catalogue (Figure 6).

By now absolute majority of focus-group respondents see Internet as main source of information, resource of quickly provided operational modern information, access point to unique foreign published editions. Next prioritized sources of information (especially for "Students", "Teachers", "Young scientists" groups) are different electronic resources, data-bases and internet-libraries.

One of the important services in participants' opinion was distant access which means access to electronic book-fund and data-bases of the Library. This service must be multi-functional, intuitively understandable. Special attention must be paid to closed data bases and granting of access to foreign sources which include world bases used for quotation - Web of Science è Scopus. Creation and development of automated systems to perform library's functions will increase loyalty of modern consumer of library services, attract new audience [9].

So, all respondents would like the library to be advanced modern center of communication and active life. Bright and fresh accents must activate intellectual activity of the visitors, comfortable furniture must create atmosphere of cosiness and concentration on work. Rich library fund will guarantee the loyalty of the consumers to the library [10]. But key factor of success and elevation to the new level must be automation of all search processes, interactivity and accessibility of distance services. If new information space is formed the library must become the knowledge center, putting together all elements of society on a single common platform.

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