



## **Cultural tourism and libraries. New learning needs for information professionals**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper concerns the study of the possible relationships among culture, learning, tourism and ICTs, in the Italian context.*

*The main aim of the research project was to identify learning needs of information professionals expressed by key informants and by librarians interviewed. The objectives were to survey the interest of librarians in cultural tourism, to assess main factors affecting development of cultural tourism projects in libraries and to outline potentials for cultural heritage.*

*The literature review considers the impact of recent economic and social changes in the field of education focusing on the concept of LLL. In order to achieve the democratic goals of an inclusive society, libraries, museums and archives have to pay attention to their public and to the different needs of their users. Similarly tourism, according to European recommendations and to visitors' recent habits, asks for new strategies. The growing sector of cultural tourism takes advantage of ICTs and reveals great potential in economic and educational fields.*

*The research focuses on a case study in the Province of Modena (Italy). The qualitative research is conducted through in-depth interviews to key informants and focus groups with a group of librarians.*

*Conclusions demonstrate that cultural tourism represents a new and difficult topic. Information professionals interviewed admitted they are not skilful enough to manage cultural tourism projects but, in parallel, they revealed a great attitude to professional development. The difficulty of intersectorial collaborations could be overcome acquiring technical competencies (especially in the digital sector). All professionals interviewed are really users oriented and this is a positive premise. The same professionals expressed a great attitude towards partnerships and cross-*

*domain approach and asked for management, marketing and good interpersonal skills to communicate effectively and to promote the interdependence of different professions. Due to this complexity, it was suggested the creation of a specialized documentation and learning centre about cultural tourism.*

*The research represents a reflection on the role of libraries and librarians in a changing context, where information professionals need new alliances and convergences.*

## **Introduction**

This paper examines the topic of cultural tourism applied to libraries and is based on an interdisciplinary approach and on the comparison of different points of views. It starts from a case study undertaken for the dissertation of the International Master in Information Studies managed by Northumbria University (UK) and the University of Parma (I). There, I tried to relate my professional role (shared among different sectors) with my academic purposes. The aim of my research study was to understand if cultural tourism can develop interesting library services in a Lifelong Learning (LLL) strategy.

Now, for the IFLA conference, I present some key concepts from the literature review, the methodology of the research and I describe the findings of the thesis concerning the convergence of Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAMs) and educational needs expressed by cultural professionals interviewed.

## **Cultural tourism**

According to Lisbon Strategy, “the shift to a digital, knowledge-based economy, prompted by new goods and services, will be a powerful engine for growth, competitiveness and jobs. In addition, it will be capable of improving citizens' quality of life” (European Council 2000). Afterwards, into the same overall strategy, European Union recognizes the potential of tourism.

“Globalisation, demographic changes and the evolution in transport are decisive factors in driving the rapid growth of this industry. With its variety of attractions and quality of its tourism services Europe is the world leading tourist destination.” (European Commission 2006a, p. 2)

Besides the economic level, the Commission considers a renewed European tourism policy promoting social cohesion and environmental objectives, through sustainable tourism-related projects, with the purpose

“to enhance cultural and natural heritage, develop accessibility and mobility related infrastructure and to promote ICT, innovative SMEs, business networks and clusters, higher value added services, joint cross-border tourism strategies and inter-regional exchange of experience.” (European Commission 2006a, p.6)

One of the most interesting sector is, without doubt, cultural tourism, that is, according to Richards:

“all movements of persons ... because they satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters.” (Richards 1996)

A growing demand for cultural practices thanks to raising level of education and free time, together with rich and widespread heritages are positive factors for the growth of cultural tourism in Europe (European Commission 2006a). This relationship between tourism and cultural heritage is explained by Hadžić:

“on the one hand, cultural heritage can serve as a tourism attractions, while tourism can lead to financial and political support.” (Hadžić 2004, p.76)

In contrast, cultural tourism suffers a general unawareness of potential of culture and problems related to use and enjoyment of the heritage, such as accessibility, management of routes and special events, lack of specialised professionals. Besides, European Travel Commission notes that interests and motivations are shifting towards popular culture, that is to say that cultural tourism needs to combine also entertainment products (ETC 2006).

Furthermore cultural tourists are particular since they organize their own holiday using a range of different media, amongst which the Internet stands out. This link between ICTs and tourism reveals surprising potential in different fields.

### **Information networks and cultural heritage**

Some years ago the European Council (2001), in the resolution on e-learning, stressed that digitalization and standardization can facilitate the access to the cultural heritage of libraries, museums and archives, in the educational perspective. More recently European Commission declares that technologies can favour the contribution to LLL and to a democratic knowledge society together with the growth of other sectors.

“Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) can do a great deal for Europe's cultural richness, both in terms of conservation and of circulation of art works for learning leisure, tourism and economic development.” (European Commission 2006b)

New e-services can play a strategic role, linking culture and tourism for learning and economic purposes.

As stated by Hadžić, digitization of cultural heritage and the use of the web can contribute to marketing of cultural institutions, attracting more visitors:

“ICTs enable tourism organization to differentiate their products and to target the market segment, which consists of an individual consumer. Websites are increasingly adapted to their users, providing improved personalization for the individual. In service industries (like tourism) the most important relationship is between the supplier and the consumer.” (Hadžić 2004, p.75)

In her short but interesting article, in addition to interactivity and virtual mobility, the same author discusses the theme of education. She states that the motivation to visit a destination can be influenced by

“education in the field of cultural heritage, which can be more successful by using digitized cultural heritage.” (Hadžić 2004, p.76)

In recent years the theme of digitization of cultural heritage is largely discussed thanks to the active role of European Union. The harmonisation of digitization

policies and the exchange of best practices can fulfil the potential of online accessibility of cultural heritage, as suggested by some European projects, such as BRICKS, CASPAR, DELOS, DPE, eRMIONE, MICHAEL, MINERVA and TEL. This wider access to specific and common heritage needs methods, systems and infrastructures able to guarantee access for the future and the exploitation of creative and economic potential, with new audiences, services and business opportunities built on users' demands. In particular, MINERVA project is largely dedicated to establish criteria and standards for quality of cultural Websites (MINERVA 2003 and 2006). The social process of delivering culture online requires a special attention "in designing packages and support from the perspective of learning, not from the viewpoint of technology" (Brophy, Craven & Fisher 1998, p. 32). Furthermore the management and the availability of digital contents require interoperability (in technology and processes) knocking down barriers among LAMs and innovative services like e-commerce (for digital copies, booking, merchandising, etc.). Cultural portals represent an interdisciplinary and multipurposes solution.

In order to recognize the potential of cultural heritage and to add value to it for tourist aims, Chetta (2003) suggests some ideas, such as the professional development of tourist trader, through marketing actions at international level and the full exploitation of technology to promote and to supply services. Among the expected results in the tourist sector in the medium term, Chetta (2003) lists:

- integrated access to online services and resources of museums, archeological sites, archives and libraries for tourist purposes;
- growth of tourist employees' competences thanks to e-learning;
- development and differentiation of tourist offers through the promotion of small institutions and places.

The theme of cultural tourism implies a movement of convergence, for institutions and for professionals. Recent applications confirm the difficult to build partnerships, especially in the field of LLL. So, some problems highlighted ten years ago by UNESCO (1997) still persist:

- cultural education is not a priority in the new adult education policies,
- appropriate funds should be allocated,
- the conservation and use of cultural heritage as a lifelong learning resource needs to be promoted.

The European examples of the cultural routes represent some positive experiments, but their potentials need to be developed. In fact, as stated by Van der Borg & Costa (1996)

"the routes are supposed to promote cultural destinations which are less known among the average tourist, and flatten the seasonal fluctuations in demand".

Recent official documents confirm the necessity of starting from needs, rather than from resources. For instance, in the *Dynamic Action Plan* (European Council 2005), as noted by Sotgiu (2006), the focus is on users and services through the analysis of their needs; it is also stressed the importance of adequate resources and, finally, the value of digital contents for education, industry and tourism.

## **Cultural tourism in Italy: BDI & NTC (Italian Digital Library & Tourist Cultural Network)**

Concerning cultural and historical heritage, Italy is considered the richest country in the world. Despite of these potentials, the lack of competitiveness of Italian economy is clear when infrastructures, technology, promotion and marketing do not offer the right exploitation of Italian tourism product.

Then, is still actual the Italian paradox concerning a massive presence of heritage together with a marginal supply of accessible cultural and historic tourism products. Van der Borg & Costa, more than ten years ago, reflected upon the causes of low accessibility of heritage and identified the choice of the opening hours of the structures (in the morning, some also in the afternoon and only a few also in the evening), as one of the main obstacles to a better use of Italian heritage for tourist purposes. Finally they summarize:

“resolving the contradiction between the richness of cultural tourism resources, and their limited accessibility means tackling some of the basic problems facing cultural institutions in Italy. The current rigid legislative frameworks, lack of financial control and inadequate management have to be addressed if Italy is to fully capitalize on its rich heritage.” (Van der Borg & Costa 1996, p.171)

After all these years, unfortunately the analysis is still actual. However, one project in particular is trying to evaluate Italian heritage in a cooperative way. The Italian application of a cultural tourism project in partnership with libraries is that of BDI (2008) and NTC (2008). The BDI (Italian Digital Library) dates back to 2001. The main aim of BDI was the promotion and coordination of digitalization of libraries and archives documents, while the objectives were the strengthening of technical standards in an European perspective, the improvement of services of “Internet Culturale” portal, the funding of some big projects, the conservation of digital collections. The same study of feasibility (BDI 2000a and 2000b) listed the need of professional improvement, both in terms of requalification for library managers and in terms of new professions. The same study revealed the exigence of an entrepreneurial attitude for the management of cultural institutions, as the necessity to foster cooperation (because, apart from SBN (2008), Italian libraries are not really involved in cooperation projects and this represents a weakness for the digital environment).

The first initiative of BDI & NTC was approved in 2003, with the main aim to develop the catalogue and the services of SBN (2008) into a system for the evaluation and the use of digital contents. Among numerous objectives, a large number relates the evaluation of cultural heritage through digital repositories, the creation of tourist and cultural routes, the fulfilment of a portal called “Internet Culturale” and e-commerce services. This first phase, together with technical standards and the infrastructure, produced “Internet Culturale”, the portal which promotes and evaluates, nationally and internationally, the knowledge and the use of Italian cultural heritage, through an integrated access to traditional and digital resources of libraries, archives and other cultural institutions.

In 2005, the second phase orienteed to the reinforcement of technological infrastructure and the expansion and the integration of digital repositories, was

approved. In particular, the project was devoted to develop the musical heritage, the cultural routes and new technological tools.

Regarding the theme of information professionals' learning needs concerning cultural tourism, an interesting experience realised by ICCU for BDI and BDI & NTC was the delivery of two national courses with e-learning modules. The first one, was managed in 2004/2005 and aimed to create the professional figures of BDI Manager and Expert for advanced documentation and promotion of cultural heritage. The second course, managed in 2008, was devoted to library manager, in order to accompany the growth of BDI & NTC.

Both courses (BDI 2005 and 2008) included competences related to cultural tourism (cultural planning, development of cultural tourism policy, etc.) with the clear aim to integrate the planning and the management of digital collections with the cultural promotion and the evaluation of cultural tourist services.

Which are the effects of these projects? Today, giving a glance to web pages of "Internet culturale" (2009) the user can search in different catalogues (bibliographical, digital contents, digital collections and Italian libraries) and explore cultural routes (exhibitions, text-travels, cultural-tourist routes and 3D itineraries). The user who travels in cultural tourist routes has five possibilities: *Wine and Food Routes*, *The Italian Twentieth Century – Lazio's Historical-Cultural routes*, *Science itineraries in Tuscany*, *PiemonteFeel* and *A trip in Tuscany*. But when he/she starts the travel can encounter some technological problems or scarces resources to visit, so that his/her visit is not always enjoyable. Among all cultural tourist routes the Tuscanian itineraries are remarkable. *Science itineraries in Tuscany*, in collaboration with the Institute and Museum of the History of Science of Florence and Tuscany Region, offer multiple integrated accesses (geographical, for images, for typology: libraries, health and religious sites, etc.). While *A trip in Tuscany* offers the *grand tour* realized by the Central National Library of Florence. In order to rebuild the climate and the atmosphere of the journey made by English and French travellers since 17<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cultural tourist route lists travellers, personages, travel books, periodicals and other sources.

Another recent example of cultural route, is the pilgrim pathway of *Via Francigena* (2009). In this case, together with links to road book, Google Earth and images gallery, there is a large presence of tourist information in several languages, thanks to new recent portals.

To summarize, all these cultural routes are experimental and, in the current phase, apart from the case of *Via Francigena* (2009), present low degree of interoperability with other resources. Overall, it is significant that the declaration of cultural tourism objectives is in contrast with the absence of direct links to tourist resources.

## Methodology

After focusing main issues of the literature review, information professionals' opinions and policy makers' strategies are examined through a qualitative research. The case study takes advantage of Italian key informants' opinions with specific experience in the field of cultural tourism projects applied to libraries. In the meantime, in order to assess the interest of librarians in cultural tourism (if they perceive it an opportunity for LLL and for libraries) and in order to identify which are the major problems in developing this kind of projects, it was selected a group of Italian librarians of the Province of Modena to conduct focus groups.

The specific objectives were:

- to improve cooperation and integration between tourist and cultural sectors, different cultural institutions and between private and public sector;
- to assess information professionals' learning needs (concerning cultural tourism).

## Convergence among libraries, archives and museums

All respondents, independently from their professional experiences, agree about the necessity of a stronger collaboration among different cultural institutions. An interviewed expresses his idea of integration:

*“A good cultural policy has to be devoted to develop the integration of cultural proposals. Especially weak cultural institutions shall take advantage of this strategy. The first aim is to bring some cultural institutions nearer to the town. Unfortunately some cultural institutions, even though preserve outstanding heritage, are very distant from their territory. I observe that this problem is particularly evident in national institutions, for a wide range of causes: the idea of preservation prevail on exploitation; institutions have short autonomy and managers lack of enterprise. Instead, thanks to large opening hours, exhibitions and initiatives, LAMs could become popular, and if all cultural institutions are active for citizens, at the end they are also attractive for tourists.”*

One key informant, explaining the possible integration among LAMs, explains the interesting concept of “district of knowledge”:

*“The concept of “district of knowledge” is more widespread than “cultural district” because it includes the economic dimension and the community, with the aim to access, produce and distribute knowledge. The “district of knowledge” is dedicated to an expert user, aware of sophisticated technology. The web can offer multiple accesses. If a scholar or a curious citizen is interested to a topic, he can be interested to cross information about that theme from archives, libraries and museums. This is a modern concept of information system, that includes lists, data, imagines, records.*

*Some years ago I was involved in the work for the telematic regional Emilia Romagna plan oriented to a cooperative domain of culture. It was defined the possible architecture (from the technological and institutional points of view). One of the objectives was the creation of cultural routes with virtual tour in museums linked to library catalogues, in order to download bibliographies. This is an example of convergence based on interoperability, and yet interoperability is not specifically technical but first of all cultural: it is mainly the interoperability of those who work in these fields. At academic level is a an utopia, in municipal administration, due to cut in expenditure, you can see mixed departments.”*

The vision of the district of knowledge presents:

- integrated perspective between economic and cultural sectors;
- exploitation of technology;
- user oriented approach;
- technical and cultural interoperability;
- awareness of institutional framework.

Furthermore, one key informant cites a distinctive experience:

*“The Tuscan initiative of scientific routes is a simple example. The collaboration among the Region, the Ministry for Culture and the innovative “Institute and Museum of the History of Science” of Florence is based on the evaluation of existing resources in partnerships. Otherwise, the two geographical routes lack of tourist promotion. In this case, institutional separations make it impossible a further collaboration and it is a pity.*

*Thanks to “Grand Tour” of National Library of Florence, Tuscany offers another example. I think it would be interesting a new kind of work related to cultural routes, beginning from history and going on territories, discovering every peculiarities, independently from single disciplines. Italian idealistic culture inclines to art and history, while I think it is important to evaluate also landscapes, scientific history, legends and so on. This is a new form of networking; it is an hard work but it is necessary. Cultural tourism needs to leave experiments and prototypes in favour of big initiatives. This new way of working together is, perhaps, that of International Cultural Itineraries as Francigena and Carolingian Routes and the Phoenicians’ Route”.*

### **Have librarians specific “cultural tourism attitudes”?**

Eventhough the experimental phase of cultural tourism projects in partnerships with libraries, many interviewees remark the pillar role of libraries and librarians.

*“Compared to archives and museums, libraries are not disadvantaged.”*

*“Historical libraries have big potentials but they need to be able to promote their heritage, while public libraries are very near to people.”*

In particular, one key informant points out:

*“The role of libraries is huge. First of all, in order to draw these ancient cultural routes, libraries have to build an accurate bibliography, with the aim to discover the authentic and historical route and the links with current interests and life styles.*

*Another fundamental role of libraries is related to knowledge management activity into the concept of digital library. Into a general inadequacy, I think that professional category of librarians is the less unprepared and potentially more suited to be trained in this kind of activities. Into a new scenario, however, participation shall not be voluntary but structured, thanks to an academic environment, where well defined programmes can develop necessary professionalisms, abandoning approximation derived by volunteerism or by personal attitudes and experiences.”*

Generally, libraries are not considered the objective of cultural tourism, while

*“... the real objective is putting together different worlds. Comparing librarians to other LAM professionals, I believe that librarians could carry out this work schedule better than others.”*



The divide between librarians attitudes and current Italian library policy is one of the issue of the debate about cultural tourism, as confirmed by others positions. Some respondents declare that library policy seem very far from cultural tourism strategies. Specifically, one key informant reports the case of SBN:

*“There is not any connection between SBN and cultural tourism. Otherwise it is necessary to insert digital contents into the national library catalogue. According to convergence, it should be necessary a tool able to ask to different catalogues (from libraries, archives and museums). Apart from metadata, users are interested in single works. I think that, in order to realize the links for a real convergence, more than the central State, we need local area. The local district of knowledge is the key for the development of cultural tourism. Peculiarity of an area is more representative than a national territory. In similar fashion, a local catalogue with a repertory of digital contents is more representative than a general national catalogue that can be reached in a second step by appropriate links.”*

This position remembers one of the expected results in the tourist sector in the medium term, remarked by Chetta (2003): an integrated access to online services and resources of museums, archeological sites, archives and libraries for tourist purposes.

Librarians seem not worried about the new challenge to reinforce collaboration among LAMs. For instance, information professionals cite some positive examples of collaboration between libraries and archives, as partnerships about local history. The local history section of the library and the archive are logically linked with the purpose to increase the historical memory of the community. Librarians and archivists are used to work together, especially for the study of ancient documents or for history workshops about research techniques for students or adults (as universities for senior citizens). After the study of local documents about the city, some Councils experimented new forms of town planning or new kind of tourist tour or the production of small tour guides.

On the other hand, museums seem to offer potentials to exploit, but current experiences are not encouraging. Relating to the convergence among LAMs, one librarian affirms that

*“museums seems separated, far from archives and libraries and far from their local context (and from people) too.”*

The reason is attributed to the main vision of museums that is conservative:

*“the conservative vision of museums can become a cultural problem because reduces dynamism and transform museums into boring institutions.”*

Another reason is attributed to the lack of human resources. Finally communication strategies of museums are considered poor and far from people, especially teaching method.

However an archivist affirms that:

*“it is wrong to generalize because institutions have different histories and in the practice there are positive examples of collaboration, as in the case of castles and archives, whit well managed educational proposals.”*

As a result of the discussion a new theme emerged: the lack of coordination among LAMs. Two interviewees convene that more integration and coordination among LAMs could be successfully. The basis is in the territory but a real integration lacks. A librarian expresses her opinion:

*“integration among LAMs is fundamental into the perspective of information services. The first step is the integration of human resources. The objective is to give citizens all information tools for each kind of question. The problem is the lack of common grounds: there are a lot of differences among archivists, librarians and museums professionals. Nowadays the integration does not exist: each cultural institution works alone, ignoring an user oriented approach.”*

This vision is reinforced by another librarian:

*“even the Councils that invest a lot of resources in cultural services, forget to plan a common strategy, with the result that each institution work separately. Apart from some special event, it is very difficult that cultural services work together. This can be the occasion to reflect on a structural integration, but it is a fight against a lot of resistances. In this course, the positive position of libraries is a consequence of their cross-services.”*

Another adds:

*“archives and libraries, with their information, can be considered the real museum of a town. An integrated approach could exploit these potentials.”*

In conclusion, an interviewee claims her vision:

*“The library could be a window able to communicate other cultural institutions and tourist attractives.”*

### **Skills development and training**

The case study, through the literature review and the data collection methods, collected a large amount of information about professionals' learning needs, according with one of the purposes of this research: to assess if information professionals have specific learning needs concerning cultural tourism and to identify them. This assessment revealed that professional development is a crucial factor to develop cultural tourism in library field.

But before focusing on particular skills, it could be useful a reflection upon librarians' professional training, with the help of a key informant:

*“Generally in Italy librarians lack of professional vocation. Some years ago they did not graduate in librarianship, nowadays the degree concern history and literature more than technical skills. In conclusion University prepare librarians unable to face library management. On the contrary, as also economists stress, library services are for users.”*

The results suggest that, according to respondents' perceptions, librarians need to develop their skills:

*“Good librarians need flexibility, versatility, eventually work experiences in different fields. Perhaps the secret consists of a contamination between professions and knowledge. Especially in project working, we need people with different skills, able to compare and synthesize different points of views (as archivists, librarians and IT experts for digitalization projects).”*

Information professionals recognize their lack of skills:

*"libraries are underestimate because librarians are not trained enough and they are not able to communicate their potentials."*

Another reinforces this aspect:

*"often information professionals are excellent researchers but poor popularizers: they need new communication strategies and tools."*

A librarian states her vision:

*"if a library is an information service, we cannot consider only tools, but also communication. We need a commercial approach, with best welcoming, front offices and communication services. Often librarians lack of knowledge about communication and about users. The focus on the Internet is not enough. Librarians are not able in decoding users' questions and in "selling" library information services. Librarians need to understand that the centre of the library is the user and his or her satisfaction."*

Yet someone observes that the lack of training in managing public services with a user oriented approach is not a problem solved.

On the other hand, the current library management needs the ability to collaborate with other professionals and the competence to control different subjects. Librarians remember the different way to work compared to that of ten or twenty years ago:

*"before the librarian needed administrative skills. Afterwards, thanks to IT, the Internet and the cooperative cataloguing and thanks to librarians, libraries improved their services. It has been a dramatic change. Twenty years ago I feeled more skilful than now."*

One of the first request relates group working. Librarians seem ready, as underlined by one of them:

*"it is not easy but librarians are used to group working (more than other professionals) thanks to interlibrary systems. We do not forget that interlibrary systems work well and they are a model for other public services. We need to improve communication and group working but our basis in group and net working is good."*

Otherwise specific learning needs emerge, as:

- communication competencies,
- marketing tools (to measure services and users and their needs or satisfaction),
- project management,
- planning tools,
- the capacity to manage the change,
- human resources management,
- financial resources management,
- group working skills and also the competence to work in group with other services (as archives and museums).

The debate about learning needs attract the interest of each participants and the quantity of items reveal a previous and depth reflection on this theme. In addition, one librarian synthesizes a general opinion, asking for lifelong learning opportunities. With reference to enable information professionals to develop their skills, some

information professionals suggest new learning methods. Specifically, one key informant proposes:

*“Professional training can be obtained also with temporary transfers: periods of work in a context that is developing good practices. If, for the theoretical side of the profession formal learning can be a good solution, for the practical side of the profession I suggest direct experiences. The practice is fascinating because includes work and observation, especially if a librarian is interested to users.”*

Following, interviewees recognize the complete lack of specific training in the field of cultural tourism and one of them tries to explain the reasons:

*“There are not courses in the field of cultural tourism because the perception of librarians about the role of libraries is different. Library dimension belongs to cataloguing and technology. Yet I think that users shall be interested. Far from a traditional library, cultural tourism need curiosity, risk and will to come into play. But Italian librarians are too old to get all these risks.”*

In conclusion, a key informant illustrates his idea:

*“Before projecting single activities, I think we need to train people in the new discipline of cultural tourism. This is a new scenario, because, according to my experience, I do not think that in Italy there are documentation centres able to join resources and data bases with teachers and professionals. I believe that it will be useful a specialized centre oriented to documentation and learning about cultural tourism. Here, it could be realized an effective synthesis between economy and culture, thanks to cultural tourism. This centre, with structured courses and learning programme, shall be near the University, but strictly linked to cultural institutions, libraries, learning centres and Chambers of Commerce.”*

In summary, all learning needs listed before can converge into an integrated and structured solution: a centre with a course of study, where documentation and research are made available to different professionals involved in cultural tourism.

### **Between institutional barriers and the “district of knowledge”**

The research demonstrated that, as asked in a research question, cultural tourism is interesting for libraries and *vice versa*. Secondly, outcomes identified strategies and advices to develop cultural tourism in library field.

The main problem is to transform the theoretical approach to cultural tourism into an effective practice. First of all, ideological and theoretical sides need to be reinforced. Until cultural tourism is an empty box, it will be difficult to attract attentions, interests, ideas and funds to specific projects. A clearer definition of cultural tourism, of applications to librarianship and of advantages for stakeholders, professionals and users, is the basis for a future development.

Another difficulty of these strategies is their intrasectorial aspect, related to different disciplines, professionals and habits.

As revealed by key informants, it seems that there are ideological resistances and institutional obstacles. Furthermore, as stated by information professionals, it is also a problem of cultural habit. In fact this is a consequence of the intellectual role of

librarians that refuses culture turned into a spectacle. Only thanks to a new concept of cultural tourism, the distance between libraries and tourism should be overcome. First of all cultural tourism asks for a collaboration between the separated worlds of culture and economy. If LAMs, as institutions of memory, can cooperate to improve conservation and evaluation of cultural heritage, otherwise, it is necessary setting convenient policies for investments and better coordination, to guarantee adequate services to citizens and easy access to information, culture and knowledge. In order to build new partnerships, cultural sector cannot forget private sector. Nowadays public financial resources are not enough for LAMs. Among the weaknesses emerged into this case study, emerged the necessity, especially for information professionals, to clarify the role of private sector. Before building possible alliances, LAM professionals need to be able to attract attention of other sectors.

Secondly, as in the past, before Gutenberg's invention of printing, as recalled by Galluzzi (2004), we cannot distinguish among LAMs into the world of culture. As emerged in this case study, eventhough institutional and administrative limits are heavy obstacles because institutions have short autonomy and managers lack of enterprise, comparing to other LAM professionals, for librarians, the objective to put together these different worlds, seems to be an easier attainable goal. Another point of the current limited cultural policy is that preservation of heritage prevails on exploitation: access problems need to be solved in all their declinations (from cultural institutions opening hours, to web sites or incomplete catalogues, etc.). Cultural routes (with physical and virtual tour) can contribute to make urgent the solution of a largest access to cultural heritage. But unfortunately nowadays library policy seem very far from cultural tourism strategies: in the case of SBN, there is not any connection with cultural tourism, while the development of BDI & NTC, at the moment, do not offer real good practices.

Apart from the current situation, one of the most interesting concept emerged during this case study was that of "district of knowledge". This concept synthesizes the difficulty to overcome institutional barriers, together with the consequent benefits. The "district of knowledge" build a real interoperability: from technical and human points of view.

## **Conclusions**

First of all, it is important to recall that the theme of cultural tourism represents a new topic in the current debate of librarianship and it is often considered difficult and far also by experienced librarians. In this case, while key informants interviewed generally believed that cultural tourism can improve library services, on the contrary, information professionals, especially at the beginning of focus groups, revealed a low interest in cultural tourism (as in the digital sector too). If not all information professionals interviewed seem interested in LLL strategies, all recognize the potentials of a convergence among LAMs. Theoretically this convergence is not clear but librarians are sure that can help end users. All professionals interviewed are really users oriented and this is a positive premise for this sector.

While key informants insist on the difficulty of intersectorial collaboration; during focus groups, information professionals largely insist on the inaptitude to

communicate effectively. They enlarge the concept to marketing and management, revealing strong critical thinking into this sector. Before citing intersectorial barriers, they cite the problem of communication, that involve all library activities: from reference service to partnerships. They seem convinced that interpersonal skills and good communication can go on institutional barriers. The same professionals expressed a great attitude towards partnerships and a cross-domain approach. This positive approach could be applied to cultural tourism projects too. The problem seems to be a lack of knowledge and training that needs a special reinforcement because these professionals show the best aptitudes for group working, for learning and for professional improvement. In fact they ask to improve communication competencies, marketing and planning tools, project, human resources and financial management and, finally, specific group working skills.

The convergence inspired by collaboration among different cultural institutions can also be applied to different professionals, coming from cultural or tourist sectors, such as from public or private sectors too. The theoretical frame in fact, is made more difficult by the interdependence of different professions.

Due to this complexity, besides specific learning needs about cultural tourism projects for libraries, information professionals suggest new learning methods. In particular, an interviewee proposes to obtain professional training with temporary transfers, in order to improve the practical side of the profession with direct experiences. Another suggests the creation of a specialized documentation and learning centre about cultural tourism where professors and professionals can talk and learn together.

In conclusion, eventhough a key informant declared that cultural tourism need curiosity and risk, while Italian librarians are too old to get all these risks, information professionals intervieweed admitted they are not skilful enough to manage cultural tourism projects but, in parallel, they revealed a great attitude to professional development.

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