

Biblioteca de Biblioteconomia i Documentació:  
Testimony of a century of professional life

June - July 2015



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Facultat de  
Biblioteconomia  
i Documentació



Universitat de Barcelona

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CRAI Biblioteca  
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**A**mong the events celebrating the centennial of our Faculty —begun as a library school set up by the Commonwealth of Catalonia in 1915— we absolutely wanted/felt compelled to include a look at the library that has accompanied the school through its numerous name changes and institutional shifts and which has played an essential part in the establishment of courses that, at the time, were new in Spain and, for the most part, in Europe as well.

**B**eginning in the 1920s the library began to acquire works essential for the training of librarians, in accordance with the most innovative lines of the profession in the tradition of libraries and schools in the US and the UK. This continual effort has resulted in today's comprehensive historical collection that allows us to trace the evolution of library science, documentation and information beginning with the first editions of the most influential works. Since then the library has built a unique collection that has grown in step with the evolution of libraries and information as the field acquired a more scholarly character.

**O**ur rich collection thus preserves some of the publications that have contributed to this progress and we are proud to show them to the public, in recognition of all those who have made it possible.

**Ernest Abadal**  
Dean





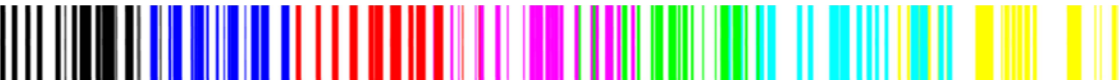
## The exhibition

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The exhibit aims to show the high points of library and information science by conducting a journey through basic works from the history of the field: although there are significant gaps, it would not be easy to find another collection of a similar scope that could show this evolution. The selection focuses on key works in the core areas of our profession: the concept, theory and practice of library and information science, the processes related to the handling and management of documents and others related to training and to the profession itself. Due to the limited space, we decided not to include materials on the history of documents, books or printing. Also excluded are basic texts on topics such as computer science, applied linguistics, statistics, law, etc., as well as works on specific types of documents.

For their interest and rarity, more weight has been given to older publications that show the status of the discipline a century ago. Thus, for the importance they had at the time of creation and consolidation of the discipline, we include the first editions of Dewey, the *Traité de documentation* of Otlet, and the CDU of 1907. As a result there are fewer works from the 1980s onward. The exhibit closes with the early years of the current millennium, in the belief that the most important works of recent years are already well-known by visitors; additionally, we still lack the perspective needed in order to assess their significance.

The founders of the library school and the public library network were primarily influenced by the model of the US and the UK, mainly due to their concept of the societal context and of the task of public libraries. This affinity also affected their idea of training professionals and, as a result, in the bibliographic choices they made. Nevertheless, there are many titles from elsewhere in Europe, especially France and Germany that were always very influential here.



## From the 19th century to the first third of the 20th century

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The exhibit includes various works from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, such as some of the first scholarly manuals on library science, as conceived by and for the new library professionals. Other monographs likewise propose a modern public library service, such as those of Bostwick and Sayle, as well as some of the early studies originating from outside the Anglo-American world, like the works by Pellisson and Morel. This first section also features key works of the period of consolidation of the techniques of cataloging, classification and indexing of collections: those of Dewey, Cutter, the original edition of the CDU by Otlet, or the adaption of this work done by Rubio i Balaguer.

The importance of the public library and its services is represented by the works of Wheeler, Otlet and Wouter and others closely linked to public libraries, such as those of Sears or Rubakin. There are also examples of the first golden age of professional associations: a period of great expansion and consolidation of the first professional journals, the initial activities of organizations like IFLA and FID (initially IID), and more modern approaches to the training of professionals, represented here by the report by Williamson.

## From new developments of the 1930s to post-World War II recovery

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The decades of the 1930s and 1940s saw the discipline evolve into a science, with its own methodology and research. The journal *The Library Quarterly* and the use of the term «library science» are examples of this shift. This coincides with a time of important theoretical developments such as the seminal works of Ranganathan, Bliss or Otlet, targeting new areas for the future and laying the groundwork for scholarly documentation and the organization of knowledge. Cataloguing would experience a renovation with the «Vatican rules» of 1931, followed in the 1940s by those critical of case-based reasoning, leading to the works of Lubetzky and the Paris Principles in the 1950s.

The difficult years following Spain's Civil War (1936-39) and the postwar period in Europe also affected our library: compared to the preceding period there is smaller presence of monographs from other European countries and the US. Perhaps due to cultural proximity and to the emergence of the discipline in countries like Cuba, Mexico and Argentina, there are a number of publications by Latin American authors who influenced library science in Spain —Manrique de Lara, Buonocore, Sabor, etc. —and who followed the Anglo-American tradition and, in some branches, incorporated elements from the Francophone world. The European revival after 1945 is made evident by works such as UNESCO's *Public Library Manifesto* or plans for UK public libraries, which are examples of change in a totally transformed world.

## Information Science and the emergence of computer applications

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**D**uring this stage, works about «documents», viewed as a discipline distinct from the classic library science, start to appear: we have «incunabula» such as the works of Briet and Bradford. Subsequently, the literature reflects the continual introduction of technology into all processes and professional tasks, with special attention paid to information services and searching, as well as related tools and systems such as databases; Foskett, Katz, and, later, Webb are representative of this period. Retrieval vocabularies, mainly thesauri and some new classifications, would soon appear in the library catalog, such as the first edition of *TEST* or the works of Aitchison. Similarly, varied aspects of automated systems can be found in pioneering works such as Shera's and the reports on the MARC project.

**D**ue to the geographical proximity, French material had a significant presence in the 1960s and 1970s, with influential authors such as Chaumières and Guinchat or with works that served as a model, such as *Le métier du bibliothécaire* or some of the ABF's publications.

**T**he emergence of the concept and the discipline of knowledge organization is also evident, with early works such as those of Bliss and Soergel or the appearance of ISKO and its journal (initially called *International classification*) and its congresses.



## From the 1980s to the end of 20th century

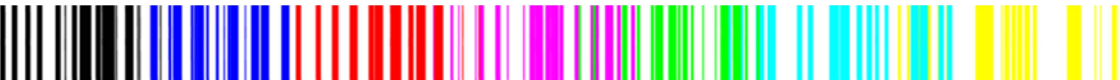
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**B**y the 1980s, this line includes a series of works focused on information retrieval and the vocabularies that make it possible (Lancaster, Belkin, Langridge, Ingwersen), that in turn give way to works in which the overall concept of the processes of analysis, representation, and retrieval will integrate the new knowledge of documentation, thus contributing to a conceptual reunification of the discipline, with no differentiation based on the medium or level of specialization: Rowley, followed by Taylor and Svenonius, represent this integrating trend.

**A**s the tasks became more complex, studies appeared that were exclusively dedicated to the management and administration of services, space, staff, etc. Works like those of Kohl or Stueart marked the way to proceed for many centers. Finally, the last display cases show examples of areas accentuated between the 1980s and the early years of the new millennium —such as professional ethic— along with examples of some of the research in different fields carried out here —from some scholarly journals to conference presentations— all of which demonstrate our Faculty's continuing spirit of renewal.

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**Jesús Gascón**  
Exhibition curator





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