

# SPECIAL USER GROUPS: AN IMPETUS TO DEVELOPMENT

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*Abstract:* Being the only veterinary library in a country means that all users involved in any aspect of animal health turn up in the library with their special needs. A university library is calibrated for the needs of professors and students, but it is far from satisfactory for other user groups: researchers, dealers of veterinary drugs or feeds, officers of the animal health administration, zoologists, or even the practicing veterinarians.

Results of a pilot survey will be presented that was made in preparation of a more wide scale investigation into the information needs and use of various groups of users and (even more important) non-users to be carried out in October-November 2003. Reference questions, received personally by the Reader's Service during the past three years, or through the homepage integrated search engine are also analyzed.

The library has been building a homepage with an increasing amount of information content for three years, and has elaborated its digitization strategy taking the intentions of authorities (the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, and the Ministry of Informatics and Communications) into account.

We try to match or confront the two sides: needs and possibilities in order to find ways to improve our electronic services and to increase their use. Our homepage is the most important means of providing electronic services, we focus on its (bilingual) development.

Electronic services are rather expensive in terms of money or labour, and the user groups requiring some of them may be small, costs and benefits should always be considered carefully. However, the cost/benefit ration may be improved by good marketing.



One of our colleagues once said that it is good to work in the reading room, because every day brings up different problems to be solved. We think, this is true, even though we may be bored of checking out books, putting them back on the selves, loading cards for the copier, or gathering tons of journals for copying. Answering simple queries searching our catalogue or databases may also become a routine.

But then comes *the special user*, who asks for something out of our daily routine. This could be a definition of the special user. But we have to be a bit more specific to be able to tell, what services these users may require.

It would be impossible to give a complete analysis of user needs and service "responses" (demand and supply) within the limits of a short lecture. First of all, we will attempt to identify some special user groups, and their information needs paying special attention to needs for (web based) electronic services. In Part 2. we are going to describe what electronic services are available in the library, on its website, and what developments are facilitated by applications. Finally we will match the needs of special user groups with existing and prospective e-services in order to find out what else we should include in the library's strategic plans, what is worth to be included, and how to market these services.

There are several factors motivating this study.

- There has been *no user survey* in the field of veterinary medicine yet, except for Mary Cserey's analysis of the use of literature by students some 20 years ago.
- The library is heavily dependent on financial resources gained through *applications* (the budget was half of the money won through applications). However, applications do not always meet the prompt needs of the library, they may even look very strange, and can hardly be fit into the strategic plans of the library.
- *Quality management* is a new requirement (hopefully not only a slogan) in libraries.
- We are concerned about

- the *information provision of veterinarians*, who have to cope with many difficulties in their practice, and
- the *well-being of our end users, the animals*.
- All this means that we have to be aware of our users' need in order to make very specific plans for the development of the library both in the short and in the long run. If these plans are exhaustive enough, we can hope for the applications that create the funds necessary for the realisation of the plans. Or to put it the other way round, no matter what kind of application will be available, we will surely have something that can be submitted in its framework.

## I. Special user groups and their needs

You may recall from the presentation of the library on the first day that the Veterinary Science Library, Szent István University is the only veterinary library open to the public in Hungary, so all would-be, practicing, and retired veterinarians and in fact anyone interested in animals or animal health belong to our potential reader population. This means

- about 1,000 students at a time (half of the Hungarian, half English-speaking),
- the academic and research staff of about 120-150 persons,
- 10-15 new PhD students and 40-50 postgraduate (specialist) students a year,
- 3,900 veterinarians (2,300 private practice, 2,000 (1,000) from state veterinary services, 300 in the pharmaceutical sector),<sup>1</sup>
- any Hungarian citizen who is of age,
- the members of our database consortium (institutional users).

### Reference questions: indicators of needs

Three years ago, you could read about the distribution of reference questions received personally or via e-mail, phone or fax to the readers' service<sup>2</sup>. Now we have data for four years. The method of gathering data is very simple: we have a little notebook at the reference desk, and register the date of the query, the question itself, and the type of user asking for it. (We always say how useful it would be to register where and how we found the answer, but there is no time for it.)

The questions can be looked upon statistically: we can find out how many questions were asked in various subjects by different groups of users. However, there are pieces of information not revealed by these statistics:

- Were we successful in answering them and providing relevant primary documents?
- Why did users not make the search for themselves?
- What sources were used to answer the questions? etc.

Still, these data can be indicators of users needs. Let us summarize the data that has been gathered for four years.

Distribution (percentage) of reference questions 2000- 2003 Subject/User group N=1005=100%	Students of the faculty (Hungarian, foreign)	Academic and research staff, PhD students	Veterinarians (in private practice or civil service)	Veterinarians ((in pharmaceutical or other business)	Other	Total
Anatomy	0.41	0.13	0.29		0.08	<b>0.91</b>
State and forensic veterinary medicine	1.04	0.56	0.97	0.63	0.77	<b>3.97</b>
Animal hygiene	0.08	0.21	0.61		0.40	<b>1.30</b>
History of veterinary science	0.42	0.21	0.63		2.02	<b>3.28</b>
Animal breeding and nutrition	2.82	0.89	0.82		1.33	<b>5.86</b>
Internal medicine, diagnostics, dermatology	<u>4.35</u>	1.87	<u>3.84</u>	0.42	0.43	<b><u>10.91</u></b>
Food hygiene, food science	0.84	1.46	0.55		0.21	<b>3.06</b>
Physiology	<u>5.03</u>	0.33	0.42		0.35	<b>6.13</b>
Pharmacology, toxicology	1.25	1.77	1.66	<b>9.46</b>	1.03	<b><u>15.17</u></b>
Pathology	0.07	0.07				<b>0.14</b>
Epidemiology, virology, bacteriology, infectious diseases	1.54	0.33	<u>5.04</u>	2.96	1.05	<b><u>10.92</u></b>
Parasitology	1.39	1.26	1.02	0.07	0.21	<b>3.95</b>
Surgery, ophthalmology, diagnostics	2.89	0.22	<u>4.63</u>	0.20	0.49	<b>8.43</b>
Obstetrics, reproduction biology, genetics	<u>3.93</u>	1.03	1.05		1.19	<b>7.20</b>
Zoology, ecology	0.55	0.29	0.35		2.60	<b>3.79</b>
Miscellaneous	1.54	3.00	3.69	0.76	<u>4.20</u>	<b><u>13.19</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>28.12</u></b>	<b>13.61</b>	<b><u>25.55</u></b>	<b>14.49</b>	<b>16.36</b>	<b>98.12</b>

*nn* below average, *nn* above average, ***nn*** maximum

What conclusions can be drawn from this table so far as special user groups are concerned? Without attempting an in-depth analysis, I marked some figures with different colours and will concentrate on these. In this case, I consider “special” those groups which are the source of either remarkably many questions, or on the contrary, which do not put questions in some fields where common sense would suggest they should.

- It is obvious that the students and staff of the faculty (41.73%) and veterinarians (40.04%) use our reference services equally. This underlines our responsibility for the information provision of vets outside the faculty.
- We must not forget that the table includes only reference questions received and answered by librarians, i.e. searches made by users are not counted. (Some more hints in this direction are provided by database statistics, though they are global numbers for institutions and databases, and the interpretations of the categories used are not always clear.)
  - Since the databases provided by the library are available all over the campus, most of the lecturers or researchers prefer to use them on their desktops. They represent over 13% of the questions, of which 3% is “miscellaneous”, most of the time checking or completing bibliographic references, or giving answer to special questions (e.g. e-mail address of persons in foreign institutions).
  - We must be aware that veterinarians, taking part in **specialist courses**, also have to write theses, and cannot avoid using the library’s databases and primary sources. However, in order to do so, they must come to the library, as databases are not available from outside the campus. We also perform searches upon requests through the phone, e-mail, and fax.
  - It is also remarkable that a single subgroup of veterinarians, those involved in the **pharmaceutical business**, counts for nearly 15% of questions, of which almost 10% is concerned with pharmaceuticals. In the light of this figure, it is obvious that this field needs special attention, also because it is the only user group that regularly pays for our services.

We introduced payment because their searches and needs for primary material are very labour intensive on the one hand, and lead to considerable profit on the other. It would not be fair to use the faculty’s resources for making profit to pharmaceutical companies.

Meanwhile, we must provide quality service for their money, that includes

- Use of all possible databases (available on the internet or in other libraries),
- Assessment and repackaging hit sets according to the individual needs of users,
- Acquiring primary material from all possible sources.

The veterinary drug market is a very competitive one in Hungary as well. Most of the companies employ excellent professionals who have scientific degrees, and are or were engaged in research as

well. Pharmaceutical business(wo)men use the information required from us basically for three purposes:

- *Promotion of pharmaceutical products.* The information provided by these people on their products is most of the time reliable, and exhaustive. Having a relatively small market also urges them to provide more and better information by means of which they can convince vets to use their medicaments. Promotion has different ways: leaflets, presentations at further training courses organised by the chamber of vets or by the faculty, visits to vets (direct marketing).
  - *Compilation of drug registration files/dossiers:* Hungary's joining the EU means, among many other things, that the permissions for veterinary drugs have to be renewed, or the documentations required for the introduction of new drugs must be prepared. This documentation includes all sorts of information a bulky chapter, in which all the relevant publications on the drug must be included. Being the only vet library, we provide this material, sometimes consisting of more than a hundred publications each.
  - *Research:* organization of clinical trials required for the Hungarian registration of drugs.
- So far as the subject division is concerned, internal medicine, epidemiology, surgery and obstetrics follow pharmacology. This is quite understandable, since these fields have most to do with practice (observe the high proportion of **practicing vets** in these subjects), and the most popular in these writing (student involvement).
    - Physiology also gives an outstanding figure in the case of students. This is due to the fact that they have to write a short essay on various delicate topics in the fourth semester, when they do not yet know anything about databases.
  - Now let us see the other end of the scale: the number of reference questions is remarkably low in the case of anatomy, food hygiene, pathology, zoology and animal hygiene (faculty). Why?
    - Anatomy is a “basic” science, which does not change so much over time. Our faculty has some internationally acknowledged researchers of anatomy as well as of physiology, who are **members of invisible colleges**. They do not turn to the library to make any searches for them...
    - Food hygiene and pathology supposed to be hot topics for the state veterinary services indicate a different problem that was summarized by a leading veterinarian of a county's **animal health and food control station**: “Scientific research is my hobby, I do not need any scientific information to perform my daily work.”
    - Zoology is yet another problem. The staff of the **Zoology Institute** never ever appears in the library, and they have reason for it: we can offer very limited services to them. Though library informatics is compulsory for the students of zoology, they either use the databases on their own, or turn to other sources.

Professionals in the field of zoology are in fact trained for this sort of partisan way of gathering information, since there is no modern zoology (biology) library in Hungary offering a broad spectrum of services, paper or electronic. How far can or should we make up for this lack?

- Animal hygiene is a subject dealing with the ethology of farm animals, their welfare, conditions of stock raising, feeding, housing etc. Interest is remarkably low among students, though there are many who are engaged privately in **animal protection**, charities, movements, etc.

Though interest in the history of veterinary medicine is modest, but it is increasing in time, thus we have to keep in mind this small, but important interest group as well.

This analysis is far from being complete, but draws our attention to the following user groups which require better services, or which require services that will raise their interest in scientific information:

- Faculty staff bibliographic “skills”
- Faculty staff zoology, EU related fields (animal hygiene, state veterinary medicine, food hygiene, pathology)
- Faculty staff top researchers
- Veterinarians writing thesis/scientific paper, journal article
- Veterinarians pharmaceutical business
- Veterinarians state veterinary service
- Veterinarians – private (high quality service, well equipped)
- Veterinary historians

#### Preparations for a survey: some more points to consider

Very well, reference questions can be looked upon as indicators, but we thought, we should know more about the level of information literacy among vets, and their habits of information gathering in order to provide better services. Since there seem to be increasing resources for digitization of materials in the “application market”, it would be reasonable to focus on what electronic contents were most useful for practicing veterinarians, researchers, and faculty.

The Hungarian Veterinary Chamber made a survey and received answer from 480 veterinarians, more than 20% of private practitioners. However, the average age of those who returned the questionnaire was over 50 years. Still it turned out that 68% have computers at home, 49% use the computer regularly, and 37% use the e-mail as well<sup>3</sup>. Since we can assume that as age goes down, the number of computers increases, and so does the level of computer literacy, we can make the hypothesis that at least half of private practitioners are or will soon be able to receive electronic services.

Mary Cserey has examined the use of literature and the library in 1981 in the light of theses<sup>4</sup>, but nobody has ever made a survey on the information use of veterinarians in Hungary. We are also fascinated by the opportunity of learning why they do not

use our library, since this is a fact: only three percent of veterinarians are registered but even they are not regular users. That is how we decided to make a survey. On the one hand we would like to send a questionnaire to a fair and statistically reliable sample of faculty members and vets, on the other hand, I made and would like to make interviews with representatives of user and non-user groups.

Data gathered come from 12 veterinarians with whom I had working relations, and hoped to get useful criticism on the questionnaire. They are working in:

Private practice 5 – also assumed official duties: 1

Pharmaceutical company 2

Animal health and food control station 2

Animal feed producing company 1

Retired from state veterinary service 1 (active in the Chamber, counseling)

Veterinary diagnostic laboratory 1

The number of their publications is also a characteristic data showing that most of them belong to the “producer” side of the information cycle as well:

- 8 have 1-10 publications in Hungarian journals,
- 3 have 1-10 publications in foreign journals
- 1 has more than 10 publications both in Hungarian and in foreign journals.

There is no room for a detailed analysis of their answers, and it would not be statistically valid anyway. However, it is interesting to know that though they are all in touch with the library in some way or another, and 6 have attended a course in library informatics,

- 5 are members of the library (required for borrowing only) and 7 are not
- 2 have never used the library, 3 use it when in need, 2 use it once a year, 4 once a month, 1 weekly.
- 5 do not know our homepage.

Focusing on electronic services also means that we have to know a bit about their computer literacy and use. We found that

- all (12) have computers at home, and 10 also have internet connection.
- 9 have computers, and 7 also internet at their workplace. (Of course for private vets there is not always a clear distinction between home and workplace.)
- all have e-mail addresses, and 11 like to receive information in e-mail
- 9 did not ever have formal training in computer use, and 7 would like to have it.
- They have been using computers for 5-15 years, and the internet for 4-7 years
- 10 spend 1-4 hours using a computer, and 2 spend more than 4 hours in front of the screen
- 11 are using the computer and the internet for gathering professional information regularly, 1 rarely
- 1 has a homepage of his own

Of possible electronic services:

- electronic TOC: 8 know this service, and 5 find it important
- database on the internet: 10 know them, 6 find important
- CD ROM databases (used in the library): 9 know them, and 5 find them important
- The full text version of journals and books are less known
- and the library is an important source of information for 5.

We tried to find out what types of problems give rise to information needs: these were

- emerging diseases
- surgical problems
- practical problems (microchip use, etc.)

The sources they used for getting the necessary information were, quite reminding us of Wales' survey:

- colleagues
- books
- homepages
- library

Asking what obstacles and difficulties they have to encounter in information gathering we found:

- lack of time – 7
- costs – 3
- gaps in information literacy – 2
- too much information – 6
- language problems – 1
- being tired

We have been working on a homepage, and Tímea tried to make it as informative as can be in the given circumstances. Of the 7 vets, who know our homepage,

- 4 graded the “Journals” and “Noctua” newsletter chapters very good
- 2 graded the Services and Catalogues and collections chapters very good
- 3 found the catalogues and the user regulations chapters good.
- It is amazing that so few know and appreciate the E-journals and E-books chapters. It seems they are still unaware of the possibilities available through the internet.
- It is also funny that they hardly know the Praxis chapter, including even one of them, who has material in this part of the homepage.
- I think the Tutorium would also deserve more attention.

Without wanting to draw farfetched conclusions, there are some important points that can be made:

- Veterinarians seem to live together with computers and the internet, that offers solid foundation for the reception of electronic services.
- Homepages (not to speak about colleagues) are more important sources of information for them, than the library.
- The library and its homepage
  - has to act more as a filter for relevant information in the mass of information veterinarians have to cope with,
  - has to focus on practice, and
  - needs much better marketing.

***It seems to be an obvious hypothesis is that practicing veterinarians, and also clinicians at the faculty can use electronic sources best which are available at their workplaces or homes around the clock, and the facilities and skills required for the reception of these services are (will soon be) given.***

Complementary to the questionnaire, I have also talked to some users, and these “interviews” put our work into a different perspective. I have found it remarkable that a leading staff member of an **animal health and food control station** does not need any scientific information to perform his daily work.

My visit to a **village vet** was even more striking. He has hardly any work since livestock production decreased dramatically after the dissolution of agricultural cooperatives, also due to the international penetration of the market. The situation will worsen after our joining the EU, when meat production will be even more strictly regulated. Farmers, who keep relatively little stocks of animals think twice before they call a vet to their animals: it may cost more than losing a sheep, chicken or turkey, etc. They do not care so much for their dogs and cats either. The vet consequently needs work much more than scientific information. I think this is a very important special group of users.

## **II. E-services: available and planned**

So far we dealt with the demand side, now let us see what we have to offer or plan to offer on the supply side.

## Homepage development

The library used to have a homepage which was installed on a remote computer, and could be updated in a very difficult manner. Three years ago we became fed up with this situation, and felt, we must have a real homepage, that we can keep up-to-date and design according to our taste. Luckily Timea came to the library at that time, and had ambitions that matched our wishes, thus our homepage came into being. A couple of months passed, and the basic information on the library were put on the homepage, and we had the opportunity to think about what other contents we should offer on our homepage.

Content development is a fishy thing: it requires much time, labour, and often money. That is why reality is always lagging behind our wishes. However, Timea Makrai has written a thesis<sup>5</sup> finishing her postgraduate studies, in which some important principles of homepage development were outlined, and the Tutorial was prepared. She summarized the criteria for building our electronic library.

### Building the electronic library of the Veterinary Science Library, Szent István University

<p><b>Visitors users</b> („the players”)</p>	<p>The Veterinary Science Library is used mostly by the students, lecturers, researchers of the library, and practicing veterinarians. They get information on the services of the library, use WinSpris for bibliographic searching (CAB, Medline, FSTA, Zoological Records), use the library catalogue, and attend user education courses.</p>	
<p><b>Sources</b></p>	<p>There are more and more electronic information sources available on the web: <i>Types of sources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• electronic journals (we focus on collecting full text journals)</li> <li>• electronic books and other documents</li> <li>• pieces of information from vet practice</li> <li>• exhibition materials (drawings, photos)</li> <li>• historic material (digitized and digital photos)</li> </ul> <p><i>Subject fields</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• veterinary science</li> <li>• veterinary training</li> <li>• zoology</li> <li>• border disciplines</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Services</b></p>	<p><i>The function of the virtual collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current information, constant updating for friends of the web and the library.</li> <li>• Preserving and mediating values (professional and historical)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Access</b></p>	<p><i>Physical</i></p> <p><i>Intellectual</i></p> <p><i>Technical</i></p>	<p>on the library's homepage (<a href="http://library.univet.hu">http://library.univet.hu</a>)</p> <p>using the browser; downloading and handling files preferred browser: IE</p> <p>other software: Adobe Acrobat Reader any image viewer</p>

A web-based library contains:

- a. printed works transformed into web pages or databases,
- b. digitized sources put on the web,

- c. services on the web (reference, lending, etc.)
- d. electronic databases (freely available or subscribed)
- e. "original" web documents (courseware, practice, collections of links)

Our homepage is built along these principles, thus it contains the following e-services:

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>E-document, database, service</b>	<b>Type</b>
Consortium	Information on the databases provided for the consortium and their use	C
Collections and Services	Electronic catalogue of the library	D
	List of current journals	
	Hungarian veterinary bibliography	D
	Dissertation databases	E (link collection)
Services	Document services, Information services, Publication assessment, user education, Prices	
Electronic Information Service	Information on service provided by other institution	C
Journals	List of standard title abbreviations, European factor, Instructions to authors	B
	Alphabetic list of journals	(with much information and links)
	E. Oláh: The reading of foreign veterinary journals. A survey from 1998	B? (full text article in a journal)
Electronic journals	Elsevier (Science Direct), FreeMedicalJournals, HighWire Press, Springer Link, and individual journals freely available	Collection of links to sources of full text articles subscribed or free
Electronic books	Downloadable materials, collections of e-books	Collection of links to sources of full text books subscribed or free
About the library	Information on the history of the library, its services, use, staff, prices, etc.	C
Practice	Practice tips, On small ruminants, On the guineapig, Emergency treatment of injured dogs, Epidemiological control regulations on a goose farm	E
	EU internet sources for animal health professionals, Selected information sources in pharmacology and toxicology	E (link collection)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Vetmail Conference	E (proceedings including full texts)
	Good veterinary practice	E (guideline translation)
Noctua	Newsletter of the library with many bibliographies, and link collections	E
VETító, ZOOM	Digitized graphics or photos from the exhibition to be found in the reading room	B
LINKS	Libraries, book trade, veterinary, current issues (BSE, Foot and mouth disease, feed safety)	Collections of links
Veterinary history	List of archive fonds	
	In memoriam Imre Steindl, Festive Days, Prominent People	E (B)
InterVet tutorial	Instructional material with many useful links to portals, organizations, databases, diagnostic systems, academic institutions and libraries, news	E+many links

## Digitization projects

It came all of a sudden: the Ministry of Informatics and Communications announced an application with a limit of 10 million forints per library (roughly 40,000 EUROS) for digitizing old material that is in endangered condition, therefore has to be preserved.

No matter what we think of libraries' responsibilities of preparing electronic contents instead of just providing access to them, we have to take these opportunities, and have to do so for the benefit of the whole veterinary community.

We had to compile a three-years' digitization plan for the period 2003-2006, which consists of the following elements:

### 1. **CATALOGUE, BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1.1 Catalogue – we are just about to change our DOS-based TINLIB to a windows-based integrated system that would be a better background to our OPAC, which is top priority.

Our material is in the present integrated system since 1986, and parts of the collection from before that time. We consider completing the inclusion of Hungarian veterinary literature from the beginnings.

### 1.2. **Hungarian Veterinary Bibliography**

- We intend to digitize previous printed volumes of the bibliography until the starting year, 1973.
- Links from the HVB to full text articles must be created.
- The Hungarian Veterinary Journal, Acta Veterinaria Hungarica, Phylaxia Veterinaria Bulletin, etc. must be completely included in the HVB. This is a project longer than three years.

### 1.3. **Processing of electronic documents**

- Static e-documents (CD ROMs) are already included in our catalogue, but we do not catalogue real web documents (dynamic e-documents). After the introduction of the windows-based cataloguing system, this must be introduced, preferably with possibility for clicking for the document from the OPAC. Of course, it must be carefully considered what to include, and how to care for permanent updating.

### 2. **DIGITIZATION OF TRADITIONAL DOCUMENTS IN THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION**

Documents were selected for digitization based on the following criteria:

- **Preservation**
  - poor state of the document
  - very heavy use causing damage to the document
- **Availability increased, service on internet**
  - document of historic significance
  - interesting for Hungarian veterinary or other researchers
  - interesting for foreign researchers
- The document is used a lot, it is not available in print any more
  - For Hungarian students, academic staff, vets, researchers
  - For foreigners

### 3. **PREPARATION OF ORIGINAL ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS**

#### 3.1. **Taking original documents over and making them available**

The journal “*Kisállatorvoslás*” (Small animal medicine) was issued between 1994-1998, and is high quality, very popular, useful and unavailable. We are negotiating with the former editor to get files, and turn them into a web document.

We would also offer place for its follower “*Kisállatpraxis*” on our homepage if we will have the necessary resources.

### 3.2 Original documents in electronic form

There are a number of original, electronic (only) documents on our homepage:

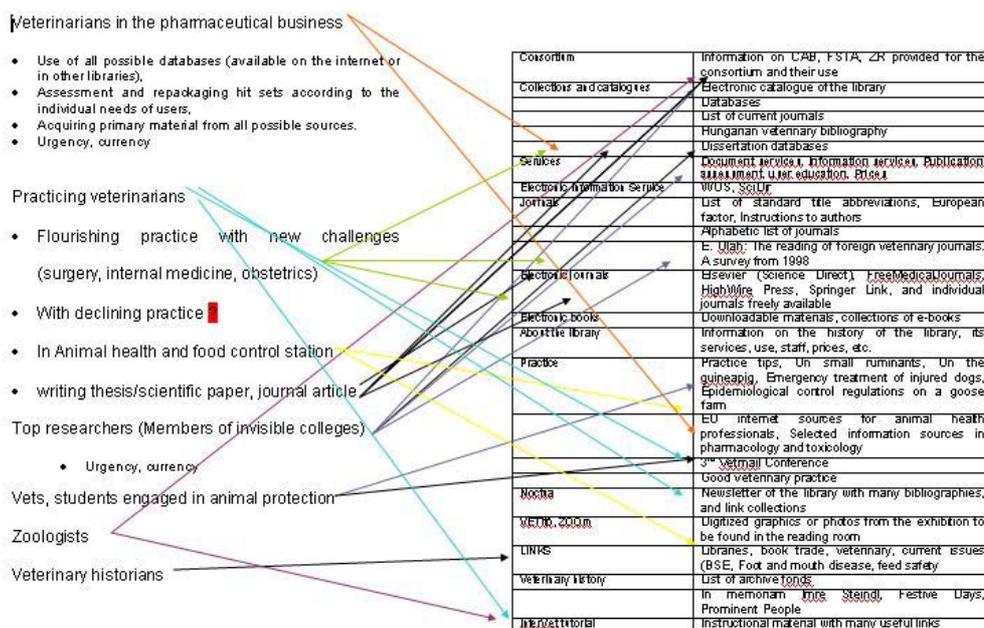
- The InterVet tutorial
- Noctua – the library’s newsletter
- Practice
- Collections of links
- Conference material (including full text)
- “Festive Days, Prominent People”
- plans: portraits (paintings, sculptures, etc.)

However, there are two preconditions of digitization projects:

- external funds must be found for overwork or contracting the work out.
- We need further training in the technological problems involved in digitization in order to be able
  - to supervise the projects,
  - to prepare materials
  - to catalogue them properly
  - to incorporate them in our homepage.

### III. Matching needs with e-services

Now let us summarize these findings, sketch the special user groups and their possible needs in terms of electronic information services. We can use the homepage index to represent e-services, since all our services can be found, and electronic services can be reached through it with the exception of databases.



If we look at the figure, we see that we have to offer most for vets

- in the pharmaceutical practice,
- with well-equipped good practices,
- writing papers, and
- top researchers,

while vets with a declining practice do not have, any services targeted for them. Likewise, we have little to offer for the state veterinary services, zoologists, animal protection.

It seems that even though we do not make any distinction between users, those who are in a better position in the profession have more services at their disposal, i.e. they are also “information rich”, while their less privileged colleagues have become “information poor”. The library must take care of this large group of non-users, and it is one of our most important tasks to find out what they need to manage their practice better, to find activities supplementing it.

It may seem odd that we assume or think we should assume a kind of “social service” instead of economizing and taking profits in consideration. The odd approach may be due to the fact – a fact we are accustomed to – that our budget is odd. It does not cover basic services, and these seem to come “as presents” from the state, e.g. it is in the contract for database subscription that databases must be made available free of charge. This is the shadow of socialist times, but it is difficult to think differently.

So far as our **catalogue (OPAC )** is concerned: we hope that the new solutions will be more easy to use, however, they will be far from the ideal, which is a search interface resembling that of search engines.

Our experience is that students and other users become familiar with internet search engines before they ever meet a library catalogue or database with its standardized dictionary and controlled syntax. It is very hard to make them understand what these rules are good, better than simply throwing words after one-another.

We must have search interfaces that can be used like simple search engines. Meanwhile, it seems to be necessary to introduce the notions of recall and precision, and search effectiveness into user education with more emphasis.

Collections of **links to other web sources** have to be compiled in various fields, until the inclusion of dynamic e-documents in the catalogue is achieved.

There is definite need for making **databases** available from distant clinics, homes, etc. It is not possible for the time being for well-known reasons. What we think we could do is to make the access points for databases subscribed by the consortium more popular. In fact, there is a service point with licence to use the databases in many cities of Hungary, which are far closer to vets than our institution.

Right now, we think we have enough databases, though a better connection to Biological Abstracts would be appreciated. Micromedex is also much used in drug problems, but it can be accessed at SOTE.

I think, with the digitization of **Hungarian journals, textbooks and lecture notes**, we could create a digital library readily at the hand of all veterinarians with internet connections. It could be available freely or with a password protection to a certain group of veterinarians.

The library should also think of making a **digital collection of animal health regulations**. We have to examine carefully what is available on the internet without being marketed, and make arrangements of mediating these services. E.g. one of the

animal health stations has a collection of Hungarian law in the field on the internet. There are EU regulations translated to Hungarian both on the Homepage of EU and on that of the Hungarian Ministry of Justice. This collection would be very useful for the state vet services, vets in declining practices, animal protection enthusiasts, etc.

There is also very great need for **electronic journals**. However, we have access to SpringerLink, and Science Direct (national license). The solution is by no means subscribing to more such services, but we must analyze the possibility for buying online access to the print journals if possible, and for contracting a large international document delivery service.

All the veterinarians, and our partner libraries would appreciate **online services**. Unfortunately, it is not a custom yet in Hungary to make reservations, orders, renewals through the internet, but it will soon be possible, we hope.

The provision of zoologists is not solved in Budapest at all, we have to fight for maintaining and completing the subscription of Zoological Record, and should build more on, and cooperate more with the department of Zoology, who do have a very rich homepage.

#### **IV. Marketing our homepage and e-services**

We think, we offer quite a number of services through the web even though we always fight with lack of time and capacity. In fact, it was the pressure of various user groups, and mainly the need to training them that forced us to purchase new databases, compile link collections, make a tutorial, etc. Without them, we could sink to the daily routine of checking out books, making simple searches in CAB, etc.

If these services are cost and labour intensive (which they are), and we do not want or are not allowed to sell them, we have to maximize use to make our efforts worth. Here are some ideas:

- Quality service=the best marketing
- Listen and talk to users=best way to quality services
- We want to take part at the Hungarian Veterinary Chamber's further training occasions with leaflets, brochures on our services. (It is also a chance to have our questionnaire filled...)
- We will put brochures, posters in the computer room
- We consider using blogs on our homepage to draw attention to new items on the homepage.
- This function is performed by the pop-up window used now to some extent.
- In the library, the opening page is the library homepage, which is a gateway to many other e-services.
- We should also work more on becoming references on other homepages like IVIS or <http://allatorvos.lap.hu>
- We continue to use Noctua, our newsletter, for promoting the library. We could make it available through e-mail alerting as well
- We would like to have an internet librarian.

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